SALLIE SKETCHING IN THE DOVE-COT.

THREE VASSAR GIRLS

IN FRANCE

A STORY OF THE SIEGE OF PARIS

BY

ELIZABETH W. CHAMPNEY

ILLUSTRATED BY "CHAMP" AND OTHERS

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THREE VASSAR GIRLS IN FRANCE.

THREE VASSAR GIRLS IN FRANCE.

A RECORD OF SOME INCIDENTS IN THE SIEGE OF PARIS.

CHAPTER I.

MÈRE BABETTE'S DOVE-COT.

IT was all owing to Mère Babette and the pigeons that Sallie was separated from her friends during the siege of Paris.

Mère Babette kept a dove-cot at Ferrière, and frequently came to Paris to sell her birds. It had been her habit to furnish the Duval restaurant on the Rue des Hirondelles with squabs, until Madame Duval conceived the economical plan of establishing a dove-cot of her own in the *grenier* of the old hotel whose lower floor was occupied by her restaurant. It had been a fine house in its day, with a carved stone chimney-piece and a ceiling painted by Le Brun, or by one of his pupils, in the grand salon. The ceiling was a little smoky, the gilding chipped, but it still gave a stately air to Madame's dining-room; and old-fashioned gentlemen, like the Comte de Beaumont, liked to look up from their thin wine at its faded splendors, and imagine themselves back in the old days, dining with Madame la Marquise. The façade was attractive too, with its funny little dormer windows sprouting from the peaked roof, — unglazed windows which

served as doors to the flocks of pigeons who made a nesting-place of the grenier, and fluttered down upon the balconies, or perched on the stone corbels carved to represent grotesque heads, which decorated the front. It was these heads which had at first attracted the girls; the house had so evidently belonged to some member of the old *noblesse*. As Sallie said, "It had an air of mediæval gentility, and of having been on calling terms with the Cluny Palace and the house of the Reine Blanche in Verdun." Its convenient neighborhood to the Cluny and the Luxembourg, where the girls loved to work, and to the Luxembourg Gardens, a favorite haunt of Mrs. Davenport, was another reason why, when our party ascertained that the best apartment *au premier* (second floor), which contained the carved chimney-piece, was to let furnished, and that there was also a studio up in the roof just under the dove-cot, the more expensive suite was immediately engaged by Mrs. Davenport for herself and daughter, and the little studio by the two art students. Mrs. Davenport, though wealthy, did not care greatly to live in the fashionable American Quarter. Much society wearied her, and she was strangely lacking in the ambition supposed to be universal among American mammas, — that of marrying her daughter into the nobility. Melicent Davenport would have enjoyed a less quiet existence; but she was sweet-tempered and yielding, and the only member of the party who really objected to the Latin Quarter as a residence was Alphonse. Alphonse was Mrs. Davenport's footman, and a very magnificent creature in his silk hat and long coat of coachman's drab. Few princes of the blood can boast an air so *distingué*. It afflicted him that Mrs. Davenport would not have a crest on the door of her coupé; and it was a matter of intense mortification to him to sit on the box of that coupé before the door of the Duval restaurant, waiting for his mistress to descend. He was certain that the cobble-stones of the Latin Quarter would ruin the carriage springs, and that Madame would be thought eccentric for not choosing to live on the Avenue de l'Imperatrice.

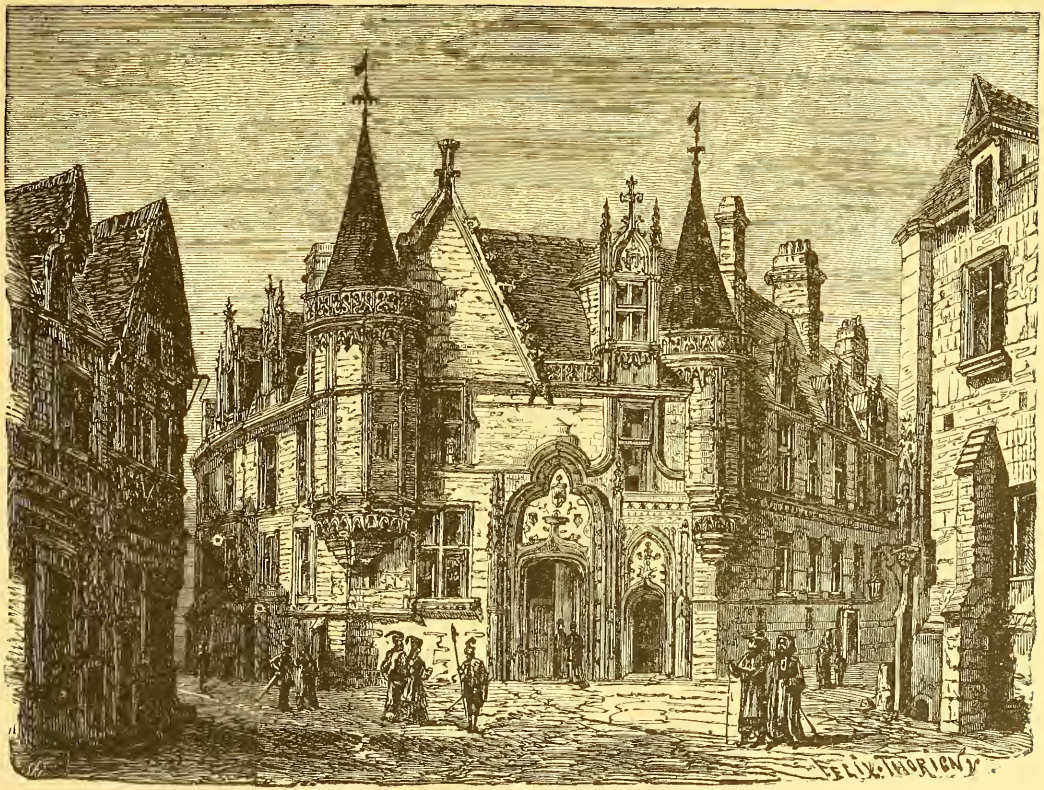
The feelings of Alphonse were not consulted, and the rest of the party found no reason to regret their choice. The three girls made Mrs. Davenport's salon very attractive by draping her India shawls as

THE LUXEMBOURG GARDENS.

portières, covering the walls with their sketches, and arranging the hot-house flowers, which Mrs. Davenport had sent in every morning, in the Venetian glass vases on her pretty tables of Florentine mosaic and ormolu.

They were three Vassar girls of the Class of '69, — Melicent Dav-

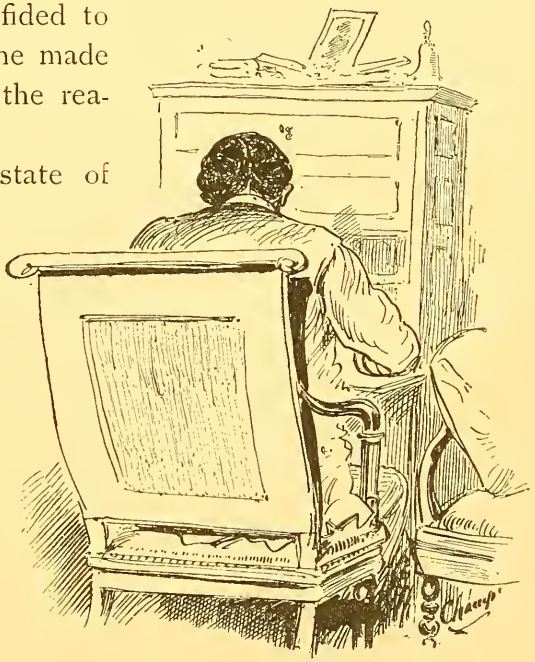
enport, daughter of a New York railroad magnate, Alice Newton, of a New Haven professor, and Sallie Benton of a Kansas City lawyer. They were all nominally under the chaperonage of Mrs. Davenport; but Sallie had inherited so much of her father's pluck and enterprise, and Alice so much of New England principle and nobility of purpose, that they were quite sufficient for their own guidance. Alice and Sallie were enthusiastic art students, and as such, sworn worshippers of Beauty. Melicent was beauty itself. Naturally, she had other worshippers than her two classmates, who had each painted her in various characters. There was the American war correspondent, Mr. James Osborn, who had an inexpensive room in the rear, just under the studio and next to one occupied by Alphonse, — a room so small that it seemed impossible for it to contain other furniture than the arm-chair and great desk at which he seemed always to be writing. Sallie was sure that the desk let down at night into a bedstead, for otherwise Mr. Osborn would have to sleep in his chair; but Alice was of the opinion that he never did sleep, but spent the night in prowling for the news which he wrote out for the papers during the day. He always appeared to write with his door open into the passage, and this the girls thought was because his room was so small that the open door gave him more air and a sensation of greater space; whereas the real reason was that he liked to see Melicent pass. He flew to open his door as soon as he heard that of the studio open on the floor above, and closed it when the girls had gone by. They never suspected this, for he was always sitting with his back to them as they glanced in, apparently scribbling away for dear life, for he was as bashful a man as could well be found; but he had cunningly arranged a little shaving-glass in front of him so that it reflected all passers-by, and his big heart gave an absurd flutter as he noticed that Melicent cast a sidelong glance of curiosity in his direction. Madame Duval told them one curious thing about him, — he was very fond of pigeons. It was on this account that he had taken up lodgings with her, and he had her permission to go



HOUSE OF THE REINE BLANCHE, VERDUN.

into the grenier whenever he pleased, to feed and pet them. He had even introduced a cage containing a number of his own, — a very rare kind sent him all the way from Dieppe, — and he had purchased some of hers to send in exchange to his friend, the pigeon-fancier at Dieppe.

Later, when they became acquainted with Mr. Osborn, — and even a modest lover will find means of making the acquaintance of the lady of his aspirations when they live under the same roof, — he confided to the girls, during a visit which he made to the grenier to view his pets, the reason of his interest in pigeons.



THE WAR CORRESPONDENT.

"Paris will soon be in a state of siege," he said, "and all mail and telegraph communication will be cut off. I must have some means of getting my letters to the English and American newspapers. I shall have these letters reduced in size by microphotography, and shall use carrier pigeons. Those birds of Madame Duval which I sent to my friend in Dieppe will, when let loose, fly directly here, and my friend will send me by them news of everything important which is going on in the outside world; while my friend's pigeons will take my letters to Dieppe, and he will mail them to their destination."

"What a clever idea!" Melicent exclaimed. "And that is the reason you keep those poor birds imprisoned; I used to wonder you

did not allow them their liberty like the others. But why have you had this great cage made? It is quite empty."

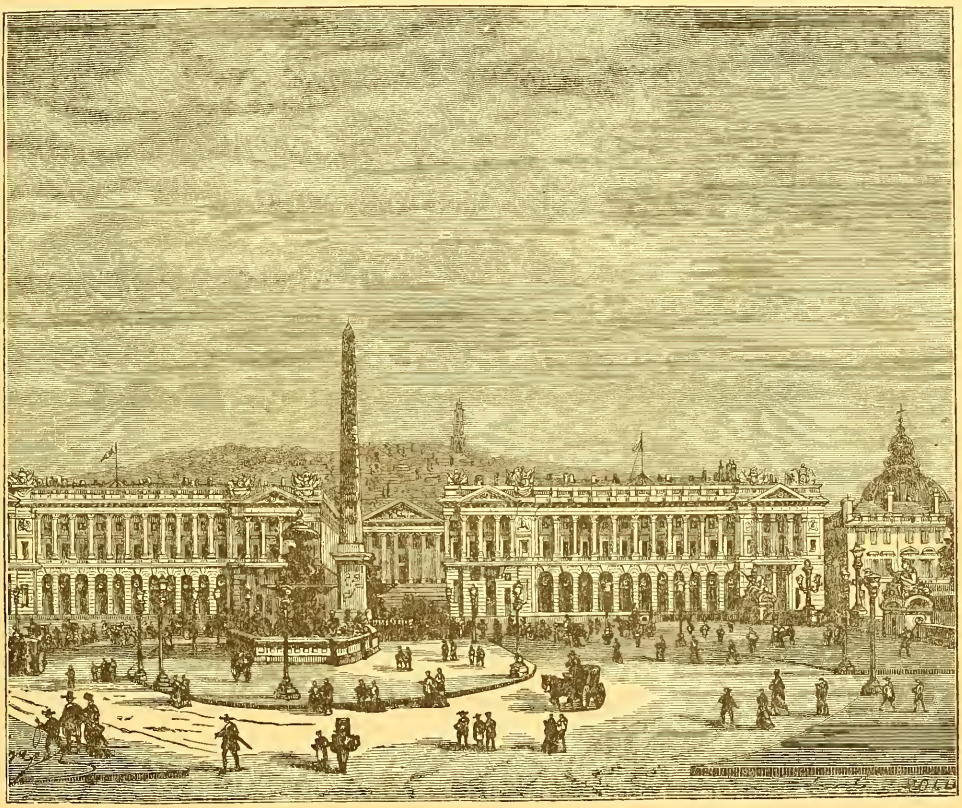
"Ah, that is another little scheme," he replied, smiling. "Madame Duval told me that she bought her pigeons of an old woman who keeps a dove-cot at Ferrière, and that the birds are perpetually troubling her by flying back and forward. Now, at Ferrière is Baron Rothschild's beautiful château, and that is sure to be chosen as one of the headquarters of the Prussians. Perhaps Bismarck himself may take up his residence there; and it will be a good thing to have means of communication with that place. I have sent word to Mère Babette, the aforesaid dealer in pigeons, that I would like a score or so of her birds, and I shall get her to take back a hamper of Madame Duval's and keep them at my service. You see, when the siege is once in effect General Trochu will be glad to pay me a good sum for the use of my ornithological post-office, for keeping up communication with the spies which he doubtless has at the Prussian headquarters."

"I am sure, Mr. Osborn," said Sallie, "that you place a great deal of confidence in us, in being willing to tell us your plans; and we will show you in return that women can keep a secret."

Mr. Osborn bowed. His explanations had been directed to Melicent; and he had been so absorbed in pouring them into her ear that he had not noticed that the other girls had come in from the little balcony where they had stepped to see the fine view of Paris, and were listening intently.

"It seems so unreal," Alice remarked, as they descended the staircase, "that war is really impending. Paris was as gay as ever yesterday. It was the fête of somebody or other, and everybody was out on the boulevards, looking as smiling and happy as possible. Several regiments of the National Guards marched through the streets, but they all looked, in their new uniforms, as if they had come out of bandboxes. I cannot imagine their ever really fighting. The military bands played the gayest of opera music, and the soldiers had bouquets

stuck in the muzzles of their muskets instead of bayonets. They marched around to the Place de la Concorde,[1] and deposited the flowers before the statue of Strasburg; but it was more like a pretty effect in a play than anything else. Every one seems to think that even



PLACE DE LA CONCORDE.

Strasburg is in no real danger. I don't believe we shall have actual war here; if I did, I should advise Melicent to take her mother over

[1] "In 1830 the pavilions of the Place de la Concorde were surmounted by twelve allegorical statues representing the twelve chief cities of France." Only one of these statues is shown at the right of our illustration. The obelisk of Luxor occupies the centre of the "Place," and two beautiful fountains rise on either side of it.

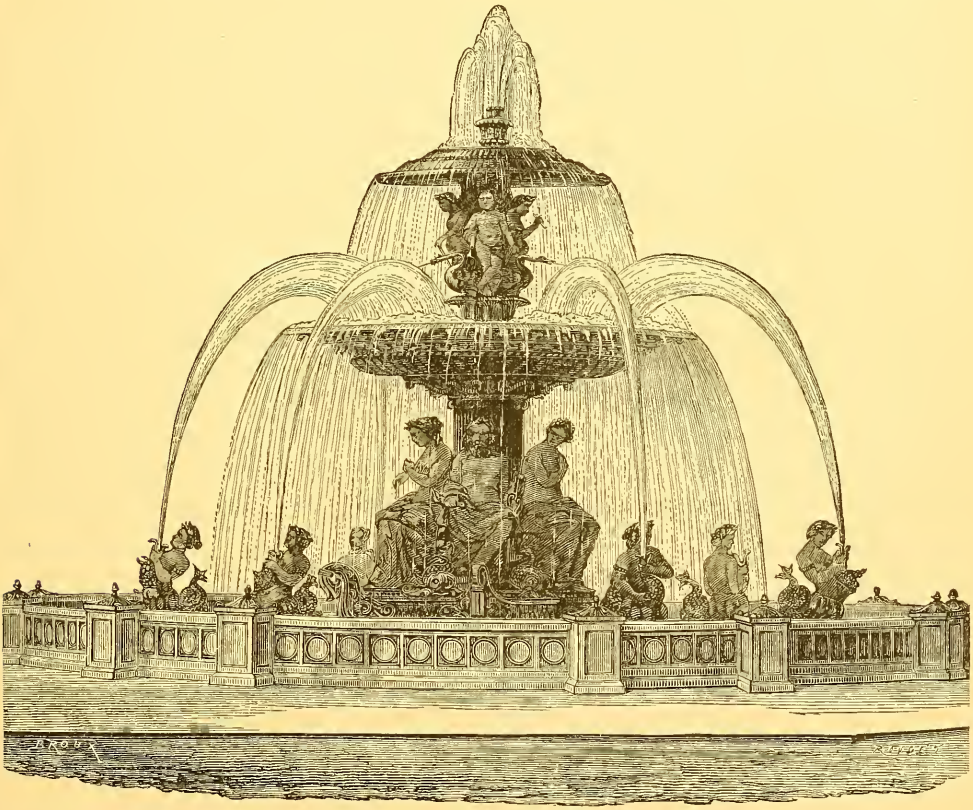
to England. Sallie and I would stay in any event; we don't intend to interrupt our art studies for such a trifling consideration."

"I fear," Mr. Osborn replied, "that there will be real war right here, and it is my duty to advise you to leave the city." He looked relieved, however, when the girls slighted his advice. Mrs. Davenport was sure it would all end with a treaty or a capitulation. She went very little into society, and as she did not understand French and never read the newspapers, she was not affected by the panic about her. Melicent in her secret heart hoped something exciting would happen, something which would be an experience to talk about in after life. They were all foreigners, she argued, and there could be no danger to them whichever side won; so Mr. Cholmondely Jones, the dapper little *attaché* to the British Legation had told her at the ball given by the American Minister, — the first which she had attended that season. He had said much more: that he would furnish her with the protection of the entire British nation, so to speak; would provide her with any number of papers signed by most distinguished M. P.'s, — names which every Prussian must respect; that he would instantly report to Lord Granville if the least inconvenience was experienced by any of their party; and that such an event would probably bring on hostilities between England and Prussia. How could Melicent feel otherwise than perfectly secure, — especially as young Jules de Beaumont, who with his father dined at the next table to their own, and was a member of the National Guards, promised that his company should stand sentinel, night and day, in front of their hotel, if there was any danger whatever.

MR. CHOLMONDELY JONES.

One lovely day in September Mère Babette came with the pigeons. Sallie held some conversation with her, and ran up to the little studio.

"Girls!" she exclaimed, "from what Madame Duval says, this Mère Babette's dove-cot is very picturesque; I believe it is just the thing for my Salon picture. You know I decided I wanted to paint that little model, — Clemence feeding Pigeons. I can use Madame Duval's birds here, but I want some sketches for backgrounds. The



FOUNTAIN IN THE PLACE DE LA CONCORDE.

guide-book says that it is lovely at Ferrière, and I am going down for a few days. Mère Babette says I can have a room in her cottage."

"But, Sallie," suggested Alice, "is it quite prudent to go to the country now that the Prussians are so near?"

"Nonsense! they may not be here for months; but if all these rumors are true, and we are to be shut up for a siege, why, there is all the more reason for going into the fields while we can, and making these out-of-door sketches which we shall want so much by-and-by."

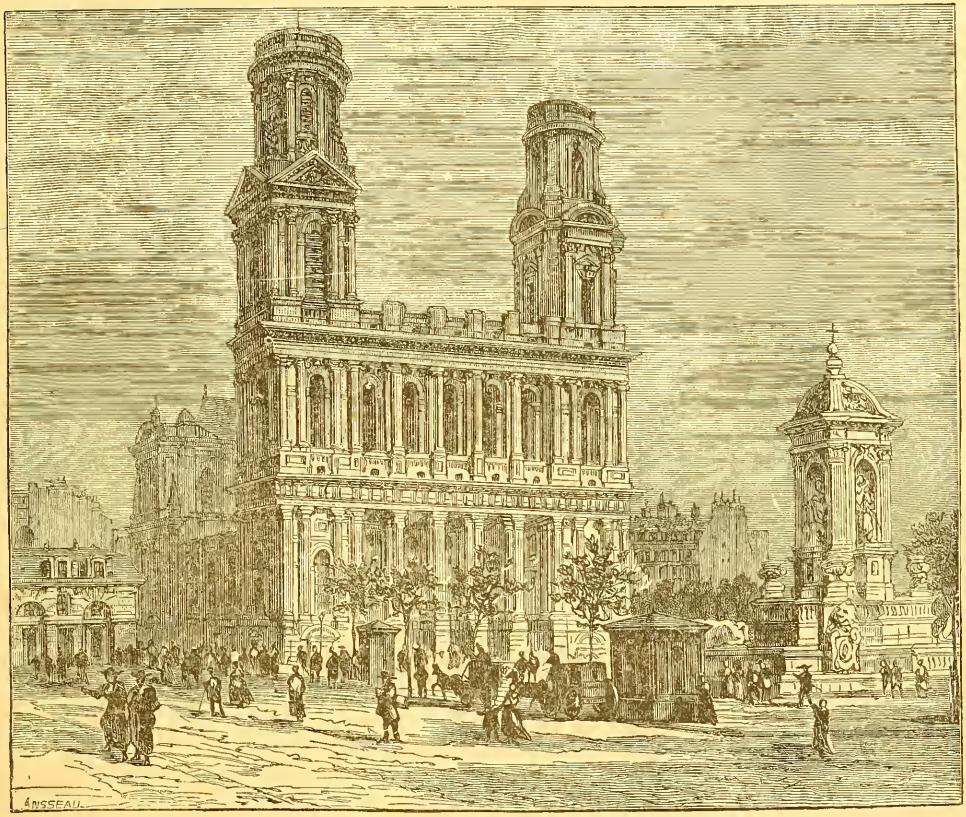
MÈRE BABETTE.

"I do not believe you will be comfortable at Mère Babette's," said Melicent.

"Oh, yes, I shall. When I asked her if I could obtain a room at the hotel, she said I could have a much better one with her, — one which has been kept vacant for two years, since her daughter ran away. The old woman spoke so touchingly of this daughter, that I want to learn the entire story, and that is another reason for going. I am perfectly certain that Mère Babette is a good old soul, and I will tell you why. While she was waiting for Mr. Osborne to come in she went over to St. Sulpice, and I followed her, for I was curious to see what she was going to do there; and, girls, she knelt for a long time on one of those queer little chairs, and while she told her beads real tears trickled down her withered old face. Then when she had finished she tottered over to the alms-box and put in the greatest lot of sous, — I thought she would never have done."

"Mother will not think it proper for you to go without a dragon. She will make you take Mathilde," Melicent objected for the last time.

"Very well," Sallie replied, with alacrity. "I 'll take Mathilde, and pay all her expenses; she 's the most endurable lady's-maid I ever saw, and will enjoy the outing. But do you suppose your mother can spare her? I shall want to be gone at least three days."



ST. SULPICE.

Mrs. Davenport assured Sallie that she would not need her maid for that length of time; and Sallie left the next morning for her little excursion. Mathilde carried the sketch-box, lunch-basket, and a shawl-strap, but they had no other baggage; for Sallie faithfully promised to be back before Sunday.

CHAPTER II.

AT FERRIÈRES.

A SHORT journey by rail brought Sallie to the station of Ozouer la Ferrière. There were very few passengers, as the travel seemed to be in the opposite direction, and no one else in her compartment. Sallie and Mathilde interested themselves in taking note of the various preparations for the siege. They had passed several new lines of defences and encampments of Mobiles, as the peasant soldiery were called. Sturdy fellows they were, with a determined, patriotic air; and Sallie felt she would rather trust them than the Nationaux, who were composed for the most part of Parisian shopkeepers, knights of the yardstick, whose entire mental effort seemed concentrated in the waxing of their mustaches.

Droves of beeves were waiting at the different stations to be taken into Paris. The victualling of the capital appeared to be well provided for. But in spite of these warlike preparations it was difficult to believe that three hundred thousand Prussians were bearing down upon the devoted city.

An omnibus was waiting at the station, which conveyed our tourists through the village, past lovely landscapes, through the park gates; for Mère Babette's dove-cot was one of the buildings on a farm belonging to the Rothschild estate. Sallie had an opportunity

"PAST LOVELY LANDSCAPES, THROUGH THE PARK GATES."

of viewing the exterior of the great château which Baron Rothschild has built on the site of an old castle of the Montmorency's. The guide-book told her that the architecture was in bad taste; but for all that, it had an imposing effect quite in harmony with the great banker's fortunes, and she could readily believe the driver when he told her that besides the part of the building reserved for the family, the château contained "eighty complete suites of apartments for as many guests, and stables for one hundred horses."

MÈRE BABETTE IN THE PARK.

"How delightful to be able to dispense such princely hospitality!" Sallie murmured; and then she thought of simple Matthew Vassar, with his three hundred guest-rooms, and added, "but I have been for four years the guest of an American who entertained more royally than that."

"It would be a pity," the driver remarked, "if the Prussians were to burn that fine château."

"Money is a defence," Sallie replied thoughtfully. "The Rothschilds have business relations with Germany, and I do not think the château will be injured."

Passing the park, the driver paused at a little wood. "If you follow this footpath," he said, "you will come out at the *colombier*."

It was pleasant to feel the yielding soil beneath their feet after the asphalt pavements of Paris. Birds were singing in the greenery, and the fresh woodsy odors intoxicated Sallie with delight. Presently they saw Mère Babette coming to meet them. She leaned on a stick, and looked older and more infirm than she had done in the church; but she was glad to see her guests, and welcomed them heartily, leading them to the picturesque dove-cot. (See Frontispiece.)

Sallie clapped her hands with pleasure as soon as she caught sight of it; but when Mère Babette led her up the crooked stairway into what had been her daughter's bedroom, she was still more delighted. The bed was hung with faded pink chintz. The light sifted in through small windows filled with diamond-shaped panes of bottle-green glass; some scarlet geraniums seemed to be thriving in this unnatural light, and added a vivid spot of color to the room. The floor was tiled, and there was a queer little corner fireplace, and a mantel with a lambrequin consisting of a rag of old tapestry, a lion rampant indistinctly boxing at two much-mended griffins. On the mantel was a barber's basin in the milky blue-and-white pottery of Lille, and a brass candlestick; over it hung a gaudy picture of the Virgin. One handsome old arm-chair, the upholstery in tatters and the wood-work at one time gilded, stood in front of the fireplace, and an *armoire* (wardrobe) of the same period, with Boucher landscapes showing vaguely through the cracked varnish, stood against the wall.

Sallie remarked on these stately pieces of furniture, which were not at all in keeping with the flag chairs and other simple appointments of the room.

"My daughter Clemence earned them," Mère Babette explained, "the first summer after she went to work at the De Beaumont villa, near Versailles. My brother Pierre is one of the under-gardeners there, and he got her the situation. It was the summer after Mon-

FERRIÈRE, THE CHÂTEAU OF THE ROTHSCHILDS.

sieur le Comte received his decoration. No one knows what he ever did to deserve it; but all the same he is Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur. Madame la Comtesse was so proud that she refurnished the villa from cellar to grenier to prepare it for a fête which the Empress attended in person, and after that there was no speaking to her. The very best of the old furniture was kept; a great deal of it, however, was sold privately, and my daughter bought that chair and armoire. She was always fond of fine things, and of making believe that she was a lady; and sometimes I feel like taking an axe and splitting up that furniture and burning it, for I fancy that it helped make her discontented with our simple way of living; but when that fit comes on me I go into the cellar and beat myself until I am in a more Christian spirit, and the hope returns to my heart that she will yet come back and prove all my fears to have been groundless; and then, you see, she would feel so disappointed to find that the few things by which she set such store had been destroyed. After all, it was the people more than the things that made her discontented. Madame was too scornful and her son was too kind, and between the two my poor daughter went up and down as one does on one of those long tilts at the fêtes, till she did not rightly know what her station was, and her head was dizzy.

"Jules de Beaumont admired her and was very kind to her, and this vexed Madame his mother greatly, and it vexed Jean Roussel too. When she disappeared it happened in this way. Madame had given her leave to spend her Sundays at home, and one Sunday she did not come. I waited all day, thinking something had detained her at the villa; but at dinner-time Jean Roussel dropped in to see if he could get her to dance with him at the fête that evening. Jean Roussel was the butcher's boy then; he has joined the Mobiles now. And Jean looked so unhappy when he learned that she had not come, that I said I would go to Versailles with him and see what was the matter. Well, when we got there the housekeeper told us that she had started for

home the evening before. I was frightened, and I demanded to see Madame la Comtesse; she came down, and I suppose I talked wildly, for I remember she told me that she would take no notice of what I said, for she believed my anxiety had taken away my reason. Jean Roussel asked for Monsieur Jules, and his mother said that he knew nothing of the matter, for he was with his father in Paris. Then Jean said that he would go to Paris too, and never cease his search until he found her. But he never succeeded, poor fellow, and he joined the Mobiles among the first, and I know he will make a good *franc-tireur* (sharp-shooter), for he knows the forests all around Paris; he was a bit of a poacher as a lad, and a good shot. He could shoot a squirrel in the highest tree, or a swallow on the chimney of the château. Sometimes I think it is a good thing that war was declared, for it has given him something else to think about. If we women could only go to war, it would be better for us."

"And have you ever seen Jules de Beaumont since?"

"Oh, yes; he came to see me as soon as he returned from Paris, and I saw in two minutes that his mother was right, — he did not know where my child had gone, for he was as crazy as Jean Roussel. 'I swear to you by the Virgin, Mère Babette,' he said, 'that things are not as you think. I loved Clemence, and I am not ashamed to say so; but she knew that my mother would never consent to our marriage, and she has run away to get rid of me.' He looked so earnest that I believed him, and I believe in him still, though there are some of my neighbors who call me an old fool for my simplicity."

"And have you never heard from Clemence?"

"Yes; a letter came from her with a Paris postmark. It begged me not to be worried about her, — as though I could help that, — for she had run away just as so many boys go, to make her own fortune and mine; and that what she was doing was honest work, and she would come back to me when she heard that Monsieur Jules was married, for she knew that she would not be safe, even with me, if he knew

where she was, until he had forgotten about her; for — and this she begged me to tell no one, and I have kept her secret until now — she cared for him as much as he did for her."

"Poor child!" exclaimed Sallie; "if she had only told you where she had gone, so that you could see her sometimes and need not be anxious about her."

"Ah, yes! but girls do not think how much their mothers love them. Sometimes I think that trouble makes people selfish; it makes them blind, at any rate, to the trouble they inflict on others."

"Probably she thought that you would be sure to show by your happy manner that you knew where she was, and then Jules de Beaumont would have you watched and find out too," said Sallie, seeking to excuse her.

JEAN ROUSSEL, A GOOD SHARP-SHOOTER.

"Perhaps," Mère Babette replied in a hopeless tone. "He swore that he would find her, just as Jean Roussel did, and it is the terror of my dreams that he may succeed. Then there come days when I say to myself, '*Tiens!* a man's affection does not last forever; he will soon be married, and she will come home and everything will be cleared up;' and at those times no money would purchase that old armoire or the chair from me. Then again the fury seizes me, and I say, 'Ah, yes! the neighbors are right; it is all a plot between them. Since he has eyes that can deceive you, you old fool Babette, what wonder that he could deceive your daughter?' But

it is well that the National Guard does not often meet the Mobiles, for he could not deceive Jean Roussel. There 's many a shot in war that goes the wrong way; and I fear that if they were on the battle-field together, Jean might mistake him for a Prussian, in spite of his fine uniform."

Mère Babette opened the armoire and hung Sallie's ulster and hat therein. Sallie noticed that there were several of her daughter's dresses still hanging there, and that one was a pink cambric trimmed with ruffles.

SALLIE.

"That was her fête dress," Mère Babette said. "She always kept it at home, and it was in that dress that Jean Roussel hoped to dance with her that Sunday evening. But, Sainte Vierge! how I have been gossiping away, and it is time that you had your dinner."

The good soul hurried downstairs, and left Sallie seated in the same attitude in which she had listened to her recital, deeply buried in thought. Should she tell Mère Babette that she also knew Jules de Beaumont of the Garde National, and that his frank, prepossessing appearance had made a favorable impression on the little American colony at the Maison Duval? Should she tell her that le Comte de Beaumont had confided to Mrs. Davenport that now the nobility of France were so disorganized by the fall of the Empire, he preferred that his son should not entangle or compromise himself politically by an alliance with any of the noble houses of France, but would favor his forming a foreign marriage, and would even consent to his leaving the country until these troublous times were over? This, with certain inquiries into the amount of dowry which each of the young American ladies

was to receive, made the Count's intentions sufficiently clear, and had greatly amused the girls; especially as young Jules (as they fancied on account of his father's failure to obtain any definite figures in answer to his inquiries) had been perfectly impartial in the attentions which he paid in company with his father to all the young ladies on Mrs. Davenport's "at home" afternoon.

On reflection, Sallie concluded that it was not necessary to mention to Mère Babette her acquaintance with the De Beaumonts. She was not so sure, however, as to her duty in regard to reporting this story to Mrs. Davenport and her girl friends. She finally decided that she must tell them, but that it would be a great deal easier to talk it all out than to write it. She rose from her reverie and called herself abruptly back to the present, for Mathilde had entered the room to tell her that dinner was ready.

CHAPTER III.

CLEMENCE.

WHILE Sallie Benton was at Mère Babette's dove-cot, Alice Newton was quietly painting, in their little studio at the Maison Duval, from their favorite model, little Clemence. The Americans had become accustomed to the military atmosphere, to the street parades, to the sensational reports in the papers, to the patriotic songs which every one sang so enthusiastically, "Mourir pour la Patrie" and, more inspiring still, Béranger's —

"Quoi! ces monuments cheris,
Histoire
De notre gloire
S'écrouleraient en débris?

Quoi ! les Prussiens à Paris !
Gai ! gai ! seront nos rangs ;
Espérance
De la France ! "

It was not that they actually discredited everything which they heard, but they had come to think, "These French are a very excitable people ; they exaggerate everything. The war will all end on paper." And the morning of the 18th of September the news that the Prussians were really on the ground and the siege begun, had not reached the Rue des Hirondelles; and its habitués took their late breakfast with their customary calm or gayety. The De Beaumonts, father and son, occupied their accustomed seats, and it was the last time that the girls saw the latter in citizen's dress. After that day they came to regard his brilliant cuirassier uniform, with its flashing steel breastplate, and helmet with horsetail crest (the last relic of knightly armor in modern warfare), as essential a part of the young man himself as the gorgeous plumage of the peacock is of that proud bird.

"THE DE BEAUMONTS, FATHER AND SON."

Mrs. Davenport had a headache and kept her room, and Melicent spent the day in the studio with Alice. She liked to be there on the days when Clemence posed ; she had said that the girl was as amusing as one of Daudet's provincial stories, and opened up an entirely new life for her consideration. Clemence had posed for the girls first at

the portrait class, and they had asked her address from their master, and engaged her to come to their own rooms twice a week, when the class had been broken up by the general exodus from Paris of the foreign art students.

CLEMENCE.

Clemence was very pretty this afternoon, in her peasant costume with its black velvet bodice, white sleeves, and jaunty cap; but there was a troubled look in her face, and a quiver to the rosebud mouth which was not usual, for she generally amused them with gay little songs and stories.

"What is the matter to-day?" Alice asked kindly.

"They tell me that the Prussians are coming," Clemence replied in French, "and that they will kill every one."

"Don't be a little coward," Melicent remarked cheerfully, looking up from the book she was reading.

"It is not for myself," Clemence replied, "surely I am safe here in Paris; but I have an old mother in the country, and I cannot bear to think of her exposed to the fury of these monsters."

Melicent laughed lightly. "They can have no possible motive for injuring an old woman," she said. "These Prussians are not cannibals."

"But how frightened she will be," Clemence persisted.

"Then," said Alice, who was always more disposed to sympathize than Melicent, "why don't you send for your mother to come to Paris?"

Clemence looked still more distressed. "Ah, Mademoiselle, I have thought of that; but since the sittings for the class have ceased, I have only my engagements to pose for you, and I fear that when the high prices begin I shall not be able to support her."

"Do you mean to say," Melicent asked in surprise, "that you support yourself on four francs a week?"

"Not entirely, Mademoiselle. I do work enough for our concièrge to pay for the rent of the little room which I share with my friend Lizzette, who is a glove-maker and gets a large salary,—ten francs a week!"

"Immense!" Melicent remarked, much amused.

"Is it not? But that will probably cease soon, for the establishment will not keep on making gloves if there is no chance of exporting them."

"How did you come to be a model?" Melicent asked after a pause.

"I was housemaid for a family who lived at Versailles, and Madame had a painting of the Blessed Virgin hung in her oratoire, and one day I was in great trouble, and I was making my prayers before it, and Madame's hairdresser saw me and laughed at me. 'You need not pray to that demoiselle,' she said, 'for I know her very well in Paris, and I can tell you she is no saint.' I was bewildered by what she said. 'The Sainte Vierge in Paris!' I said; and then the hairdresser told me that the pictures of the Madonna were not all painted directly from her by the Apostle Luke, as I had always supposed, but were manufactured by artists out of their own imaginations, and that sometimes they gave good-looking girls money for sitting to them. All this was new to me and very interesting, for the girl went on to say, 'You could make your fortune in Paris, for you have the face of a Madonna yourself;' and I had my own reasons for wanting to go away to Paris. I said nothing more at that time; but one day as I was on the way home to visit my mother,

I stopped at a little inn at the village of Barbizon on the edge of the forest of Fontainebleau. It is a great resort of artists, and they have painted pictures on the wall all around the café. It was not the shortest way home; but our gardener had business in Fontainebleau, and he had offered to take me so far in his cart, and I was to go on to Ferrières by train. So, being left at the little inn, and having plenty of time, I thought I would take a cup of *café au lait*, for I had started very early in the morning. While I was refreshing myself, an artist came in very angry, for a model whom he had engaged had disappointed him; and he had his canvas and sketching umbrella and all his other tools strapped together ready to go out into the forest to finish a picture which he was preparing for the Salon. '*À la bonne heure!*' he exclaimed when he saw me; 'this girl is exactly *mon affaire*.' And then he asked me if I was a model, and when I said no, declared it was no matter, he was glad to get a fresh face that no other artist had painted, and offered me three francs if I would sit for the lady in his picture. Well, that was a good deal of money, and I thought, 'Here is an opportunity for me to see how I like this kind of business; and if I do not like it there is still no harm done, for I can take my three francs and go on to my mother.' But I found that I liked it very well, for I had nothing whatever to do but to sit still, and that was exactly what I never found time to do at the villa, for the housekeeper kept me running all day long until my feet ached so that I would cry half the night with weariness. So I sat as still as I could, and when the day was over, the artist, who was no other than Professor ——, asked me how I would like to go to Paris and pose for his class of young ladies. I saw that he had a good face, I trusted it, and I told him that I would go; so it turned out that instead of going to Ferrières that night, I took the train to Paris instead. Professor —— took me to the concièrge of the building where I live, told her my story, and asked her to make

"THE EDGE OF THE FOREST OF FONTAINEBLEAU."

me acquainted with some honest girl; so the concièrge introduced me to Lizzette; and that is the whole story."

"No, not the whole," Melicent said; "you have said that you had a particular reason for wishing to leave Versailles. What was it?"

ALICE'S PORTRAIT OF SALLIE.

Clemence flushed a little and drew herself up proudly. "That, Mademoiselle, I shall not tell you."

Melicent comprehended that she had intruded where she had no right. "I beg your pardon," she said quickly. She prided herself on never committing an unladylike action, and she felt mortified and awkward.

Presently she rose, and saying that she must see whether her mother needed anything, she left the studio. Alice painted on in silence for a time; she, too, was eager to know Clemence's entire history, but her interest came from warm sympathy, and not from curiosity. Alice overflowed with a loving imagination, and was always putting herself in the place of others, and suffering with their trials and rejoicing in their joys. Melicent said that Alice frequently suffered more intensely than the people whom she pitied; and this was quite true. Something of the girl's nature showed itself in her art, which was always full of a sentiment of her own. She had painted a portrait of Sallie in a

ALICE'S PORTRAIT OF MELICENT.

great Rembrandt hat adorned with a flamingo breast, which Sallie usually wore in a very saucy position on her independent little head; but she had so arranged her attitude, and above all had so subdued the face by a lovely, wistful expression, which was entirely foreign to Sallie's nature, but was rather a reflection of her own, that Jules de Beaumont, recognizing the fidelity with which the shape of every feature was rendered, but puzzled by the unfamiliar expression, said, paradoxically but very truly, that it was a perfect likeness, but he never would have known it was Sallie.

Sometimes she brought to the surface hidden traits which really existed, as when she painted Melicent as "My Lady Disdain," in a green velvet costume which would have befitted a Doge's daughter. Melicent's admirers, during the first stage of their acquaintance, all declared that such scorn was entirely foreign to her nature; but as their own presumption received its just reward, wished that they had earlier recognized the faithfulness of the portrait.

After Melicent had left the studio, Alice went on weaving to herself a little romance about Clemence, until suddenly looking up she saw that the girl's eyes were full of tears. She dropped her palette, ran to her, and put her arms about her. "It is the old mother, is it not? You are sorry that you ran away without telling her."

Clemence nodded; she was sobbing too violently to speak.

"Yes, it was thoughtless," Alice went on, "and that word contains our excuse as well as our crime; you never dreamed then what pain you were putting her to. Now, don't pose a minute longer, but take this money and go right home to her. Then if she thinks best to come back with you to Paris, we will see that you do not starve during the siege."

Clemence dried her eyes, and with many thanks hurried away. Alice painted on mechanically for a few moments, and then exclaimed, "How stupid of me! She said her mother lived at Ferrierès, and that

is just where Sallie has gone. It can't be — yes, Sallie said she had lost a daughter. It is — it must be — Mère Babette!"

At dinner she was telling her story to Mrs. Davenport and Melicent, and did not at first notice that there was more excitement than usual at the little tables. Jules de Beaumont came in hurriedly in full uniform, and spoke for a few moments to his father, who was already at table, and who laid down his "Figaro" to listen to him.

Melicent touched Alice's elbow. "What a *poseur* he is!" she whispered; for Jules had always seemed to her one of the military coxcombs which an English writer has so well caricatured in the "Rhenish Frontier":—

> "As I stroll at my ease down the gay Boulevard,
> I seem to civilians a luminous star.
> I hear people say, for I listen, you know,
> 'Regardez ce brave-ci, n'est-ce pas qu'il est beau!'
> And they pat me, and treat me to ices and beer.
> Vive les armes! Vive la guerre!
> Vive — the Rhenish frontier!"

The young man was undoubtedly vain of his uniform, but he was shy as well. He would spend an hour or two in getting himself up for inspection, and another half-hour in screwing his courage to the point of presenting himself, in all his splendor, before the merry dancing eyes of those American girls. But on this evening he approached their table, his helmet on his arm, with an earnest look from which all self-consciousness had vanished.

"Madame Davenport," he began, "is it possible that Mademoiselle Benton has not returned from her sketching tour?"

"We do not expect her," replied Mrs. Davenport, "until to-morrow."

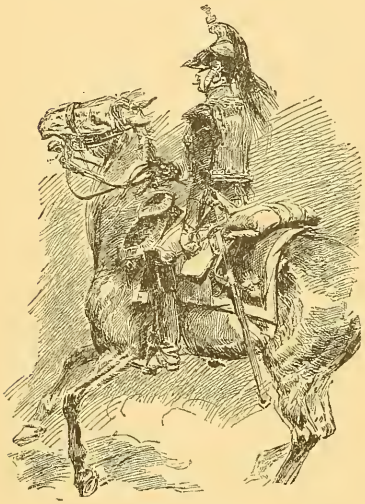
"But, Madame, the Prussians are here. Uhlans have been seen by refugees from the environs; they report Count Bismarck at Meaux, and say there is a division of Prussians near Vincennes. I fear she is already cut off from you."

Mrs. Davenport turned very pale, and placed her hand on her heart.

"These are certainly only rumors," Melicent exclaimed, rising to the occasion.

"I fear it is quite true," said M. le Comte, joining the group.

"Will you telegraph her, for us, to return at once?" asked Mrs. Davenport, at the same time writing rapidly.



"HE CANTERED PAST THE WINDOW."

"I will take the telegram," said Jules, "and I trust it is not too late." A moment later, and he cantered past the window like a knight of old, Alice thought, going forth in the service of distressed ladies.

His father took a seat beside them. "Let us have a little council of war," he said, with a reassuring smile. "Let us for a moment suppose the worst, and that Mademoiselle is separated from you. It is not a pleasant situation for a young girl; *mais*, *enfin*, Mademoiselle Sallie is a young lady of resources, like all American young ladies, and I think we may trust her. Moreover, I have a plan to suggest, which may be useful. My wife is also a woman of resources. We have a villa near Versailles. When it became inevitable that what is now taking place would take place, she said to me: 'You and Jules must go to Paris and identify yourself with the people. If you flee the country you will be stigmatized as a valet of the Bonapartes, and we can never return. If, on the contrary, Jules enter the army and associates himself with whatever government is in vogue in Paris, his future is before him. He has no past to be blotted out, and though it is difficult for us to turn political somersaults at our age, we must do it for the sake of our son.' *Figurez vous*, Madame, the admiration which I felt for my wife when I heard her utter such sentiments!

'It shall be as you say, my angel. Henceforward we will renounce Badinguet (nickname for Napoleon III.) and become Republicans. Come to Paris with me and help me to begin a new life.' But here again my wife was wiser than I. 'No,' she said; 'it is enough for the new government as represented by General Trochu and M. Jules Favre to swallow Jules and you. I should be too great a morsel for them. I was always the ardent Imperialist of the family, and my conversion would not be readily believed. You two will get on much better if it is understood that you have quarrelled with wife and mother for the sake of your country. Besides, who is to stay and protect our home? If we all desert it, it will be destroyed by the Prussians. On the contrary, if I remain at the villa with our servants, I may indeed have Prussian officers quartered upon me, but I will make them guard our property; the Prussians are but men, and I have yet to see the man of whom I am afraid.' *Ainsi, Madame, vous voyez* what a treasure of diplomacy I have in my wife. I have not a doubt that she will so win over the officers whom she may entertain, that should the Prussians unhappily succeed in their designs, not only the lives but the property of my son and myself would be quite safe in her hands."

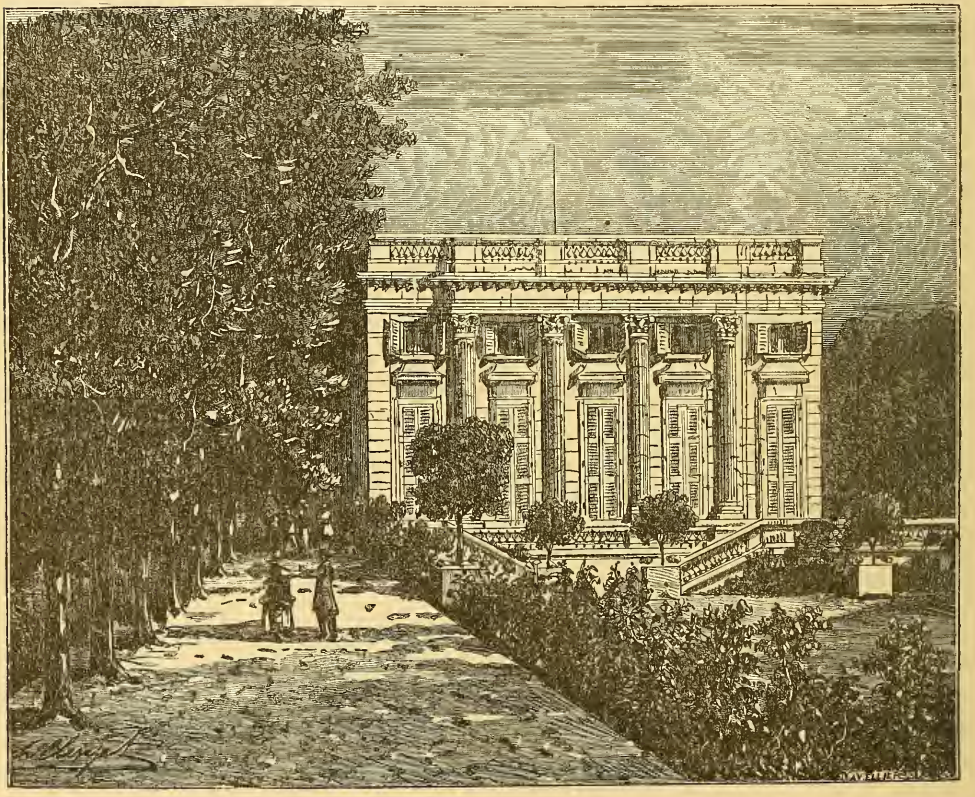
Mrs. Davenport, who was consumed with anxiety for Sallie, was wearied by the old gentleman's lengthy discourse, and rose from the table congratulating him upon the *finesse* of the Countess.

"But, Madame, *de grâce*, for one instant. Do you not see what all this signifies? If worse comes to worst, we will telegraph Mademoiselle Sallie to put herself in the hands of my wife, where she will be absolutely safe."

Mrs. Davenport paused; the value to Sallie of such an asylum struck her forcibly. "You have my most profound thanks, Monsieur," she said gratefully; "my acquaintance with your wife is so slight, however, that I hesitate to ask this great favor of her."

"But, Madame," he replied, shrugging his shoulders in the expres-

sive French way, "*il faut faire à la guerre comme à la guerre.* If Madame will allow me to present myself at her salon with my son when he returns from the telegraph office, we will then have the pleasure of continuing this conference."



THE LITTLE TRIANON.

Alice bought a paper, and the party went up to their rooms to read the rumors with more of credence and alarm than they had hitherto given to them. Presently a quick step was heard on the stairway and a timid knock at the door. "Can that be Jules de

Beaumont?" asked Melicent. It proved, however, to be little Clemence, who was so much agitated that she could not at first speak. "There are no more trains," she gasped at length; "the gates are closed, and no one is allowed to leave Paris."

Alice and Melicent looked at each other in dismay. "Then no one can enter Paris," Mrs. Davenport said, "and Sallie will have to accept the hospitality of the Countess de Beaumont."

No one thought of Clemence until they heard her sobbing to herself: "What will become of me? What will become of my mother?"

"My poor child," said Mrs. Davenport, "I shall require a new maid, for Mathilde is detained in the country with our friend. If you would like the situation, you may remain with us."

Clemence's face brightened. "I will do anything to prove my gratitude, — anything which Madame bids me," she exclaimed, falling upon her knees before Mrs. Davenport.

"Then be so kind as to wait upon the door; some one is knocking. It is probably M. de Beaumont and his son."

Clemence sprang to her feet with what seemed to the ladies remarkable alacrity; but instead of opening the right door, she hurriedly ran through another doorway just beside it, which led by means of a long passage to some rooms at the rear of the house.

"How very stupid of her!" Melicent remarked, as Alice obligingly admitted the De Beaumonts. "What a little goose she is, any way!"

Jules de Beaumont was really more depressed than his friends by the news which he brought. They had already learned that railway communication was closed, and Mrs. Davenport quite cheerfully tore in pieces her telegram, which Jules brought back, since it was quite useless to ask Sallie to return at once.

She accepted M. de Beaumont's invitation for Sallie, and wrote another telegram explaining matters, and urging her immediately to put herself under the protection of the Countess. M. de Beaumont shook hands gleefully all around.

"This is quite as it should be," he exclaimed. "*Nous voilà*,— one family in the country, one family in the city; all has arranged itself perfectly."

Mrs. Davenport drew back a trifle. His cordiality was somewhat overwhelming; but what could they do?

Morning brought a bombshell with the information that the telegraph station at Ferrières was in the hands of the Prussians, and no message could be sent to Sallie.

James Osborne came into the restaurant just as Jules de Beaumont announced this news to Mrs. Davenport. "Of course we can send a message to her," he remarked confidentially; "we can communicate with her as long as she is at Ferrières."

"I don't see how," replied Mrs. Davenport, quite bewildered.

"But I do," exclaimed Melicent, clapping her hands in delight, "Mère Babette's pige—"

"Sh!" said the young war correspondent.

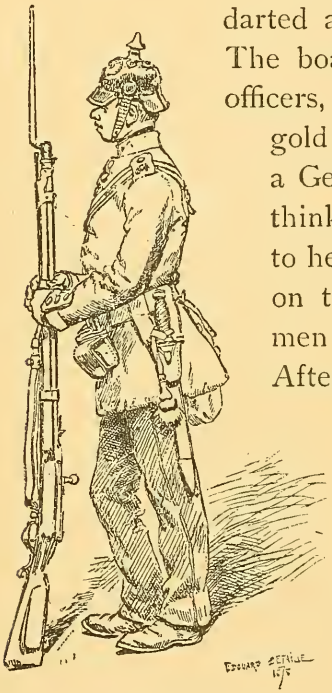
CHAPTER IV.

AMONG THE PRUSSIANS.

SALLIE slept well, and was awakened by the fluttering and cooing of doves in the turret and upon her window-sill. Mathilde brought her a roll and a cup of coffee, and she set out at once for a morning's sketching. Mère Babette had engaged a little peasant girl as model, and Sallie had decided to make a study of the lake in the park, with the child fishing upon its banks, and to reserve the dove-cot for the afternoon.

As she tripped through the park she noticed that the sentinel at the great gate had been changed. The day before, a slender, strait-laced Frenchman had occupied the post; now, a heavy-set man in a different and ill-fitting uniform stood in his place. As Sallie was already inside the park, it was not necessary for her to pass the sentinel, and she only gave him a careless glance as she hastened on to the lake, anxious not to lose a moment of the beautiful morning. The lake glittered in the sunshine; Mère Babette, who had brought the sketching in her peasant's *hotte*, or field-basket, which she wore strapped to her back as Indian mothers carry their pappooses (see back of cover), made such a brilliant spot of color, in her plaided turban, her red bodice with its full white sleeves, her blue apron, gay petticoat, and picturesque wooden shoes, that Sallie dashed in a sketch of her as she stood under a pollarded willow. Ernestine, the little model, amused herself meantime with gathering wild-flowers,

but when the first sketch was finished, and Mère Babette had gone back to the dove-cot, she took her place as a little fisher-maiden. She posed very well; and as she had blond curling hair, a fair skin, and blue eyes, she reminded Sallie of a German child whom she had seen on the Rhine; and fancying herself quite alone, she sang clearly, "Du bist wie eine blume." To her annoyance, a skiff darted around a point of land and passed by them. The boat contained three gentlemen in uniform, — officers, Sallie fancied, from the amount of glittering gold braid, — and they must have heard her singing a German song. It was vexatious; for they might think her a Prussian sympathizer and put an end to her sketching in the park. The boat was moored on the opposite side of the lake, and the gentlemen walked up the path toward the château. After a time she became so absorbed in her work that the incident ceased to trouble her, and on her return to the dove-cot it had entirely slipped her mind. She spent the afternoon as she had planned, in securing a sketch of the dove-cot. They were quite remote from the village, and no one came to interrupt them. Mère Babette sat on the doorstep and knitted, Mathilde took out her embroidery, and the pleasant September day closed peacefully.



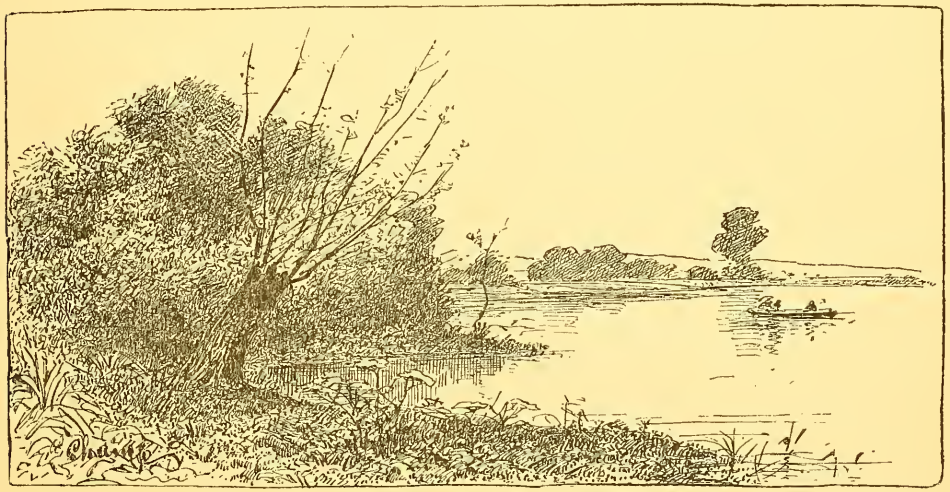
"THE SENTINEL AT THE GREAT GATE."

The next morning, having leisurely finished another sketch, Sallie strapped her effects and walked with Mathilde to the railway-station, Mère Babette hobbling along with her and greatly regretting her departure. Arrived at the station, they were puzzled to find the ticket office closed, no officials in sight, no tourists in the waiting-room. What could this sudden stagnation mean? Sallie at length found the ex-

omnibus driver lounging about the station from force of habit, though his vehicle and horses were nowhere in sight, and the mystery was explained. Had not Mademoiselle heard? The last train had left Paris on the previous day, and the railroad gates were closed; there would be no more trains to or from Paris for no one knew how long.

"Then," Sallie exclaimed resolutely, "I must go by diligence or private conveyance. What will you charge for taking us?"

The man declared himself desolated not to be able to oblige Mademoiselle, but his horses had been seized for the French artillery, and



"THE LAKE GLITTERED IN THE SUNSHINE."

he was sure there were none to be had in the village; besides, it was more than rumored that a detachment of Prussians had arrived, and were between Ferrières and Paris.

"I am not at all afraid of them," Sallie asserted, "and I must join my friends; they will be very much worried about me. Mère Babette, will you not take me in your market-cart?"

Mère Babette cheerfully harnessed her donkey, and the three women set out for Paris. They had driven but a few miles before

they saw the road bristling with the lances of the Uhlans, and presently their progress was barred by a German outpost.

THE LITTLE MODEL.

"Can we not go around?" Sallie asked of Mère Babette. The sentinel understood her, and smilingly replied that all roads to Paris were held by the Prussians.

"To whom can I go for permission to pass?" asked the still undaunted Sallie.

"Unser Fritz is at the Château Ferrière," was the reply; "if you bring a permit signed by him all will be right."

So there was nothing to be done but to go back to the dove-cot and take dinner, for they were all very tired and hungry, and then ask for an audience at headquarters. The Crown Prince was said to be very courteous. There were reports that he had visited the French wounded after the battle of Werth, and had expressed his disapproval of the war. His wife was a daughter of Queen Victoria, and Sallie was sure that he would have a kindly feeling for any one speaking the English tongue. Taking Mathilde with her, she presented herself boldly at the château, and asked for an interview with Prince Friedrich. The orderly to whom she presented this request looked much amused, but showed her into a room where a portly secretary was writing at a table covered with papers. He removed his eye-glasses and regarded her with astonishment as she finished her little speech.

THE SECRETARY.

CAPTAIN MÜLLER.

"The Prince cannot see you," he said shortly, "and this proceeding is so entirely irregular that it will be quite useless to present the request; it would certainly be refused."

Sallie bowed, and sarcastically thanked the secretary for his kindness. Tears blurred her eyes as she passed out into the sunshine, and she had walked some distance before she heard steps on the walk behind her, and turning saw that she was followed by the orderly who had so smilingly admitted her. His face was grave now, and he touched his helmet respectfully. He was a slight undersized man, as delicately featured as a girl, with blond hair and forget-me-not eyes, with a frank way of looking one full in the face, which instead of embarrassing Sallie made her feel unaccountably at home. He had been smoking, but he removed his meerschaum, and introducing himself as Captain Müller, continued: "I beg pardon, Fraülein, but perhaps I can be of some service to you. I think I passed you yesterday as you were sketching by the lake, and heard you singing a German song. Why did you not tell the Herr Secretary that you were of our nation? It might have made a difference in his answer."

"But I am not a German," Sallie replied; "I am an American."

"I might have known it," the young man returned with enthusiasm; "you Americans hesitate at nothing, however unreasonable."

"If your friends were in the city worrying about your safety, I do not think this would seem to you an unreasonable thing."

"But even if the Prince should give you a safe-conduct through our lines, that would not admit you to the city; indeed, it would be almost a proof to the French that you were a Prussian spy."

Sallie laughed gayly. "My friends are too influential for that," she replied. "There is Minister Washburne, who knows us all personally, and Mr. Osborne, who has so much influence with General Trochu, and the Count de Beaumont, and Mr. Cholmondely Jones in the British Legation, — no one would ever suspect our party of anything of that kind. Besides, I have my American passport and a French *laisser-*

passer, and Mrs. Davenport will have her carriage waiting for me every afternoon at the gate until I return. Alphonse, our coachman, is well known by the guards; we used to drive out to the environs every day."

Captain Müller was evidently much interested. "Have you your papers with you?" he asked. "I would like to show them to the Prince."

"They are at the dove-cot," Sallie replied; and the young officer waited upon her to the door, and sat in Mère Babette's kitchen while Sallie ran upstairs for her credentials. He looked them over thoughtfully, and promised to do what he could.

"And now, Fraülein," he added, "if you could sing me another song of my Fatherland, it would do me a world of good; for we poor fellows are sadly afflicted with homesickness."

The shadows were falling outside, and Sallie sat down by Mère Babette's fireplace and sang a little folk-song, an *abschied*, or farewell, of a soldier to his village home. A realization of the loneliness of this young man, who was scarcely more than a boy, came over her as she saw the far-away look in his eyes as he stood by the door with folded arms thinking of his own home on the far-away Rhine, and she threw a sympathetic, hopeful thrill into the refrain: —

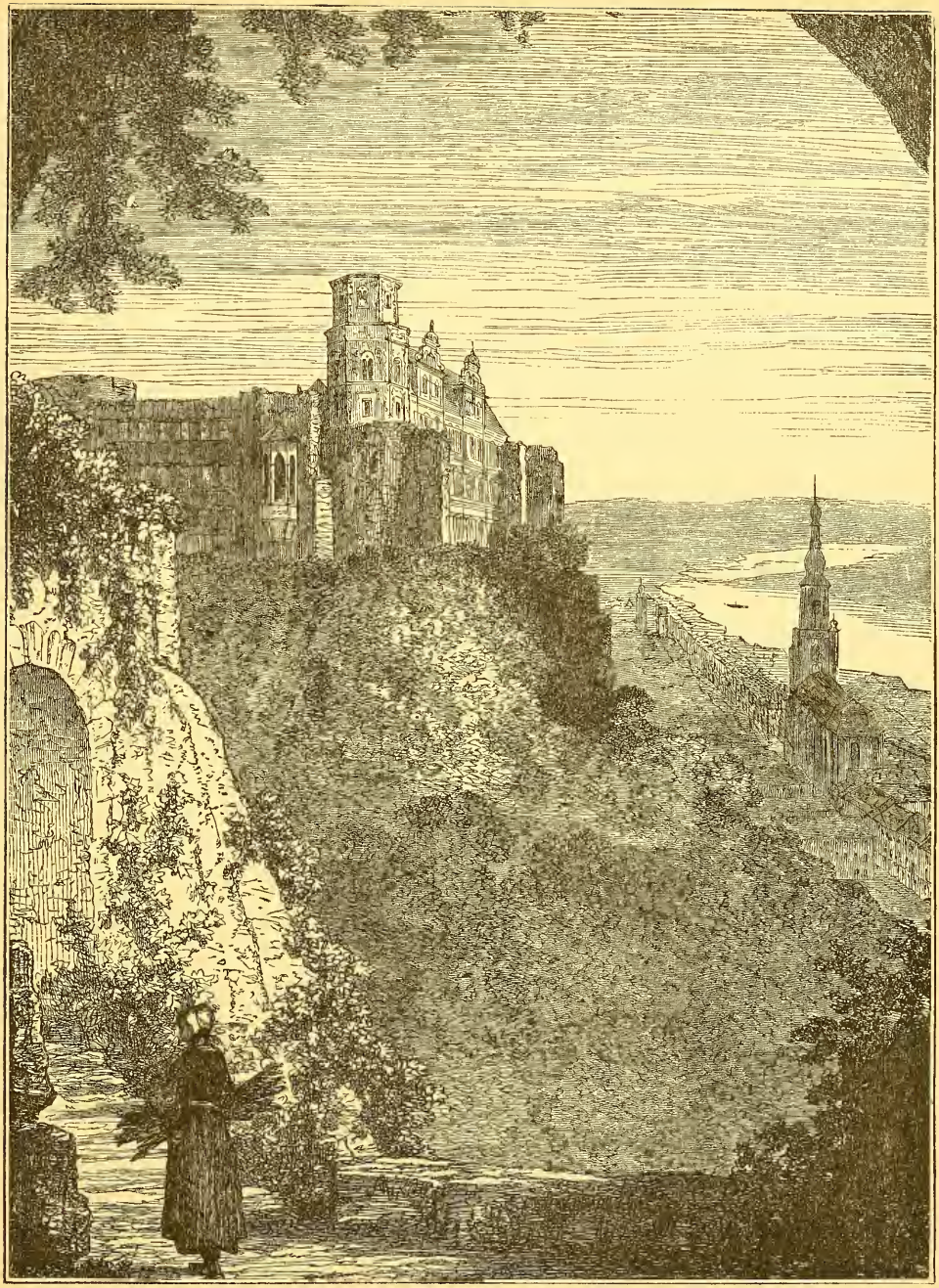
"Wenn i' komm', wenn i' komm', wenn i' wiedrum komm'."

There was a little silence after she had finished, and then the orderly thanked her in an unsteady voice.

"If I only had a piano here," Sallie said, "I would sing you some of my Schubert songs; but perhaps this is quite enough."

The young man started from his reverie. "If the piano were here I could play your accompaniments; but it is later than I thought. I will do the very best for you that I can;" and he hurried away.

Sallie was very hopeful; but she was disturbed in the night by the sound of distant firing. Fighting was going on somewhere, and she could not help feeling that after all her own position was a very unsafe one.



"THE FAR-AWAY RHINE."

Early in the morning she was wakened by Mère Babette, with the cheering news that one of her pigeons had come back from Paris with a note under its wing. It was from Mrs. Davenport, and ran thus: —

MY DEAR CHILD, — We are distracted for your safety. Will be at the Porte de Neuilly with Alphonse every afternoon to meet you; but if you cannot get back to us, go to Madame de Beaumont, at Villa Beaumont Versailles. She will assist you in getting out of the country.

Yours lovingly,

ISABEL DAVENPORT.

On the reverse of this scrap of paper, which was of the most diaphanous tissue, was written in James Osborne's hand: —

MY DEAR MISS BENTON, — General Trochu has no spy at Ferrière. If you can arrange with some one before you leave to send me weekly instalments of important information, I shall be greatly obliged.

Your obedient servant,

JAMES OSBORNE.

Sallie immediately burned this missive over the little lamp which was heating her *café au lait.* Then she wrote an answer to Mrs. Davenport, saying that she had not yet given up being able to return, and begging her to have Alphonse and the coupé at the gate every afternoon that week; and to Mr. Osborne, giving the result of her observations on the previous day both on the road and at the château. Having finished her letter, she called Mère Babette and asked for one of the Duval pigeons to carry it for her.

Mère Babette's grief was pathetic. A Prussian soldier foraging for the officers' mess had just left the dove-cot, having seized upon that particular crate of birds for the gentlemen at the château.

Sallie was in despair. Why could n't he have taken some of the other pigeons with which the dove-cot was overflowing? Now, there was no possibility of sending any messages to Paris.

Poor Mère Babette was very contrite. "The other pigeons were

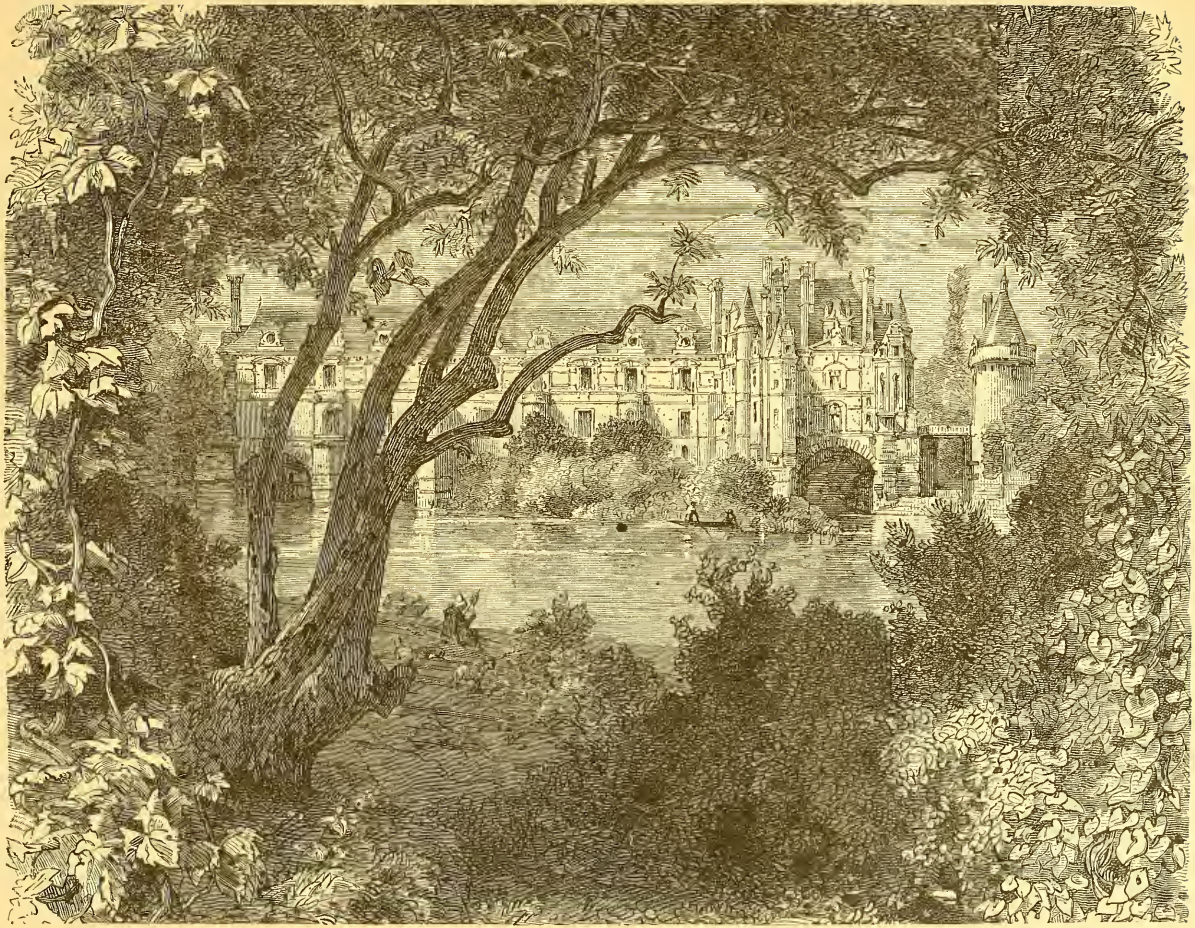
wild, and would have given him the trouble of the Evil One to catch; while these, the soldier could see, were ready caged to his hand. Ah! they are cunning, these Prussians, for one of them talked with me and kept my attention by telling me how much I resembled his wife, and that he would promise that my dove-cot would not be burned while he had a head on his shoulders, and all the time *voyons* his *camarade* was ransacking the *colombier*, and walking off with the basket of carrier pigeons."

Sallie formed a sudden resolve while Mère Babette was talking: she would not only rescue the carriers, through her new acquaintance, but if anything occurred to detain her here she would herself send back to Mr. Osborne what news she could gather. If the Prussians did but know, it would be greatly to their advantage to speed her on her way to her friends, as she would like nothing better than to serve that gruff old secretary a turn. She did not consider how she was to obtain her information; and as she did not like to present herself at the château, she sent a note to Captain Müller, complaining of the theft of the pigeons, and sat down to her sketching in an uncomfortable frame of mind.

Her note brought the young officer immediately to the dove-cot, and Sallie repeated the story, telling the trick by which the Prince's servants had robbed the dove-cot of this old peasant woman, in whom she was greatly interested. "*Das ist abscheulich!*" (That is shameful!) exclaimed the orderly. "I need not wait to see the Prince. What are the birds worth? Let me reimburse the old woman."

"It is not the money," Sallie stammered, a little taken aback by the turn which matters had taken; "but if the birds have not already been killed, she would so much rather have them."

"Ah! truly? They are then such pets? I thought peasants were always avaricious," and Sallie feared that her flaming color would betray her; but the young man promised that the pigeons taken from Mère Babette that morning should be returned to her immediately.



"AT THE CHÂTEAU."

"You are a spirited girl," he continued, turning to Sallie, "and I am sorry that I have not yet been able to see the Prince about your safe-conduct. You see they had an important council of war at the château nearly all night. Jules Favre has appeared at headquarters to treat on conditions of peace, and the Prince has been listening to the opinions of his generals. I had to make a record of everything that was said, for the secretary who should have been on duty was tired out. The officers will soon leave the château; and if you will come with me to the little *kiosk* on the hill yonder, I can point Count Bismarck out to you, as well as some of the most celebrated generals in our army."

Sallie dropped her brushes and accompanied Captain Müller to the summer-house, which was not far distant. As the officers rode down the avenue he handed her his field-glass, and told her not only their names, but their histories, and the opinions which each had uttered, and the plans which had been suggested at the council. "The upshot of it all is," he continued, "that we require the cession of Alsace and Lorraine as a condition of peace, and for an armistice, immediate possession of Metz, Strasburg, and Mont Valérien."

"The French will never consent to that," Sallie replied impulsively.

"Do you think so?" Captain Müller asked. "A good deal depends, you know, on the answer which the French Government makes. We leave here in a few days. You see we are gradually tightening our grip upon Paris. The Crown Prince is going to Versailles. For myself, I am very glad. I have heard so much of the wonderful palace with its treasures of art, where that unfortunate little Marie Antoinette was so happy for a time. She was Austrian, and I am Bavarian; so I have always regarded her as a sort of countrywoman of mine. I am curious, too, to see the great fountains play; they must be *wunderschön*."

"We may see them together. I am also going to friends near Versailles," Sallie was on the point of saying; but the thought that

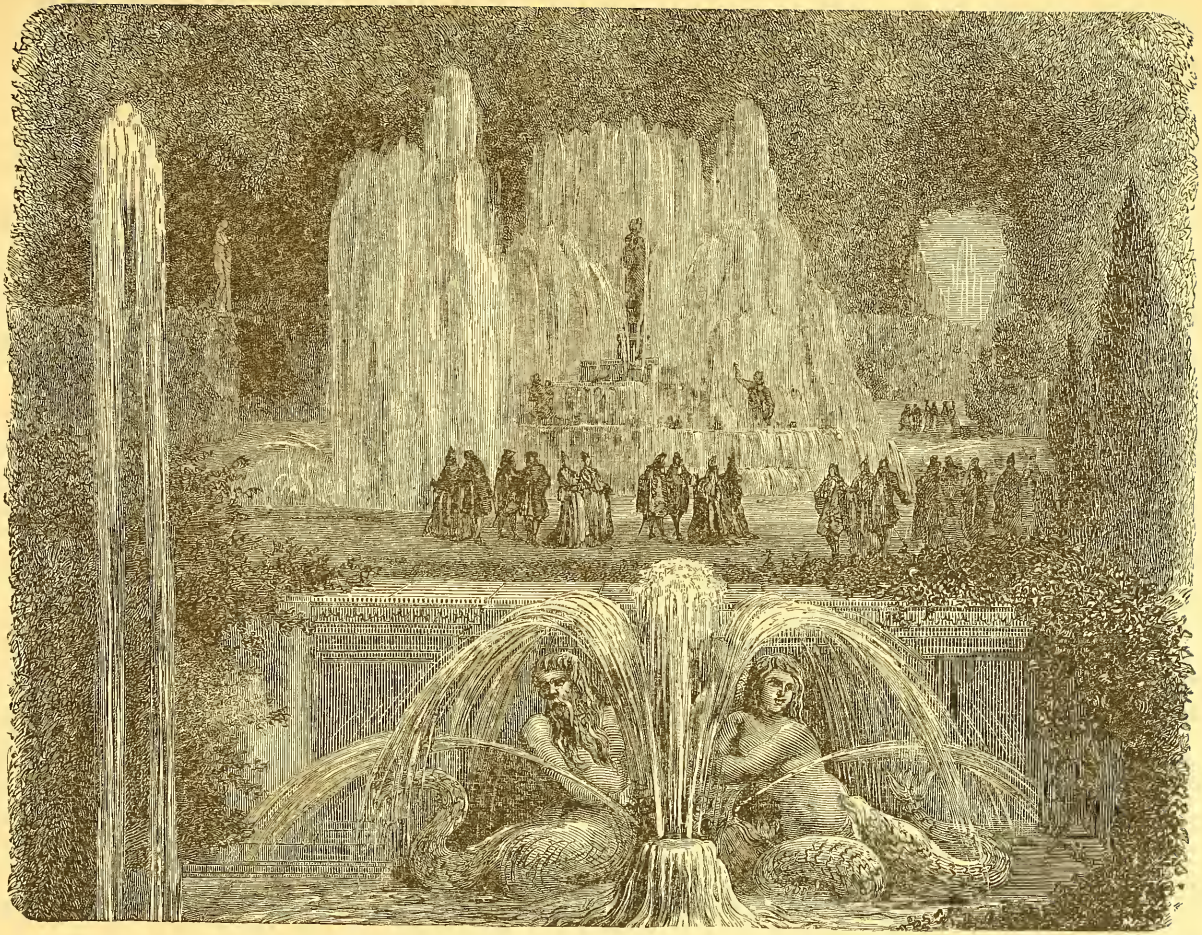
this would seem to be an admission that she would like to continue the acquaintance, came in time to prevent the utterance of the statement, and she only replied that she hoped he would be able before his departure to arrange her permission to enter Paris, and would save the pigeons before it was too late.

"You remind me that there is no time to be lost," he replied, gallantly taking his leave.

Sallie came slowly back to the dove-cot, debating within herself whether it was quite honorable to send to Mr. Osborne the information which she had obtained from this unsuspecting friend. Much of it would be made known officially on the return of Jules Favre to Paris; but there were certain points as to the carrying on of the campaign, should the conditions of peace be rejected, which would be important for the French to know. She sat down in the courtyard, and taking a block of sketching-paper from her pocket, made a careful report of the more important part of the conversation. Presently Mère Babette called her in to lunch, and after running up to her own room to make herself presentable, she took her place at the little table. While there, the soldiers who had stolen the pigeons appeared with the basket, and a note for Sallie.

"Take them up to the loft," she said indifferently, not caring to manifest too great an interest in the birds.

In the note Captain Müller informed her that he had been suddenly summoned to accompany the Crown Prince to Versailles. He had not yet been able to secure her permission to enter Paris, but he assured her that he still hoped to obtain it, and would himself take pleasure in bringing it to her. He had not returned her own papers which he had borrowed, and Sallie felt some misgivings in being without them. Still, as she fancied that he might need them, she tried not to feel disappointed. When the men came down the stairs, only one of them entered the kitchen; the other vanished quickly around the corner, and Sallie thought he had a sack of barley in his arms. She



THE FOUNTAIN AT VERSAILLES.

told the soldier standing in the doorway that if this were so he would be obliged to return it; and Mère Babette went up to the loft to see if anything was missing. She came back reporting that all was right, and Sallie thanked the soldier for returning the pigeons, and dismissed him.

"I must leave you, Mère Babette," she said after she had thought the matter over. "To-morrow morning I will trouble you to harness your donkey-cart and take me to the Villa Beaumont. Perhaps while I am there I can learn something of your daughter;" and she explained to the good woman her acquaintance with the De Beaumont family.

"I will take the Duval pigeons with me," she continued, "and you must bring me any message which may come from Paris."

She went up to the loft to look at the birds and feed them, and found that only a half-dozen had been returned, the others having been potted for the breakfast given to the generals that morning. "I must send my news to Mr. Osborne to-night," she thought, "and tell Mrs. Davenport that I am going to Versailles;" and remembering that she had left the first draught of her report for the war correspondent in a pocket of her ulster, she descended to her chamber and threw open the door of the wardrobe. What was her surprise at discovering that it was entirely empty. Not only had her ulster and great hat with the scarlet feather been spirited away, but the dress with pink ruffles which had belonged to Clemence was also missing. She stared at the empty hooks for a few moments without comprehending the situation; but she soon remembered the man with the bag, and realized that the soldier had stolen the clothing while she was talking with his comrade in the kitchen, — exactly repeating the manœuvre by which he had captured the pigeons. At first she laughed, wondering what use the men could make of feminine clothing. Then a graver look came into her face as she remembered that her résumé of Captain Müller's conversation was in the pocket of that ulster. Its discovery would prove her a French spy, and she hardly dared think what the consequences

might be. If Captain Müller was still at the château she might hope to have her ulster returned before the note was discovered.

Putting on Mathilde's bonnet, she hurried to the château, only to ascertain from the secretary that Captain Müller had already gone. He looked so forbidding that she did not dare mention the theft for fear that it would precipitate her arrest; and hoping that the soldiers, who evidently did not understand English, might destroy the papers, or at least not send them to headquarters until after her departure, she came back troubled and much perplexed to Mère Babette. She did not think it best to confide to her the full extent of her apprehension, but she tried to persuade her to set out at once for Versailles, making the journey by night. This the old woman positively refused to do, arguing very sensibly that they would be sure to fall in with Prussian outposts who would consider travelling by night far more suspicious than by day. Sallie finally determined to send off only her message to Mrs. Davenport. She felt the danger of playing spy too deeply to involve herself any more at present. She passed the remainder of the afternoon in vainly attempting to sketch. Just after dinner Mathilde, who had been to the village on some errand, rushed into the kitchen breathless and evidently much frightened. On catching sight of Sallie she exclaimed, "A ghost! Sainte Vierge! A ghost!" and sank on the floor in a dead faint.

"I RAN AFTER THE CARRIAGE."

For a time all other fears were forgotten in bringing Mathilde to her senses, and persuading her that Sallie was not a disembodied spirit.

When she became calm she told a wild story of having seen Sallie

VERSAILLES THE SPLENDID.

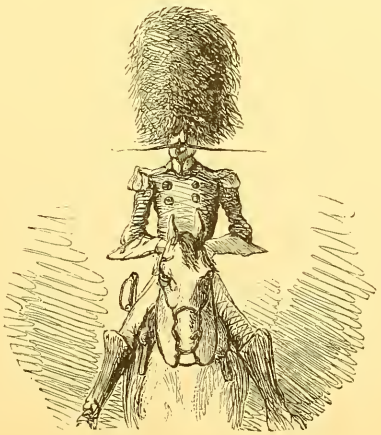
in the village, seated in an open carriage with a Prussian officer. It was in vain that her mistress assured her that she had not been in the village that day.

"I saw you with my own eyes," Mathilde insisted; "you had on your ulster, and the hat with the flamingo plume, only there was a travelling veil over your face such as I have never seen you wear; but there is no other person in France who wears such an ulster and such a hat. I could not have been mistaken. I ran after the carriage a long way, and you turned and waved to me to return. At that instant I experienced the bitterness of death, for I thought that I was forsaken."

"That one action ought to have convinced you, dear Mathilde, that the person you saw was not I; for I would never forsake you. My cloak and hat have been stolen; it was probably a friend of the thief who was hurrying away with the plunder."

"But it was only a common soldier who took them," grumbled Mère Babette, "and Mathilde says this lady was in a fine carriage with an officer and servants. *C'est bien strange.*"

"Yes," assented Sallie, "it is indeed a mystery. We will not try to unravel it, but will get to bed as quickly as possible, for we must be ready to start at the first peep of dawn."



CHAPTER V.

HARBORING A SPY.

MRS. DAVENPORT, though outwardly calm, was still much alarmed for Sallie's safety. Every day the girls went up to the dove-cot in the attic to look over the pigeons and see if there was any message from Ferrières, despite Mr. Osborne's assurance that he would bring them the first that arrived. One morning as Melicent was looking away to the southward through her opera-glass, she suddenly exclaimed, "I see a pigeon flying wearily in this direction. No, it is only a chimney swallow; for it has lighted on one of the chimneys in the next square."

Clemence, who was dusting the room, took the glass. "Mademoiselle," she exclaimed, "it is indeed a pigeon. I have tended and watched them enough in my childhood to know them well. It is only resting on the chimney. Parisian pigeons are all cooped up like Madame Duval's, for it is not safe, poor people are so hungry now, to leave them at large. This one has probably come from a distance."

"It is well the cats are cooped up too," Melicent replied; "that roof used to be a regular Champs Élysées for them."

Clemence suddenly dropped the glass, and exclaiming, "Mademoiselle, the bird is flying this way!" scampered upstairs to the grenier. Melicent dashed after her, and they stood together on the little balcony just as the pigeon fluttered down. It brought Sallie's message,

A FRIEND IN NEED.

and every one was greatly relieved to learn that she was not only safe, but hopeful of rejoining them.

"I shall go to the Porte de Neuilly in the coupé this afternoon," said Mrs. Davenport.

"Oh, no, Mamma!" Melicent replied; "you know this is your reception afternoon. Alice and I will meet Sallie. What fun it will be!"

"You must not be too sure," Mrs. Davenport cautioned, "or you may be doomed to disappointment."

The girls set out, nevertheless, in high spirits. The guns at Mont Valérien were booming, but they seemed to them only a holiday salute, and not real war. On the Avenue de l'Impératrice, Jules de Beaumont, recognizing their carriage and driver, cantered up to them, and on learning their errand rode with them to the gate. Here he exercised his influence with the guards, and they passed through into the Bois de Boulogne. What a change from the brilliant pleasure-grounds which they had known! A redoubt had been erected, great trees cut down to form barricades, and soldiers were encamped on the race-course. One of these, who stared at them as they passed, struck the girls as not at all resembling a Frenchman.

"He is a Moblot," Jules de Beaumont explained. "They are not used to their uniforms yet; but there is no better stuff for making good fighters than in our Mobile."

The Prussian batteries could be seen on the heights of St. Cloud and Meudon. They waited a long time, and were about to turn back disappointed, as they had done every day since Sallie's departure, when they saw a soldier who knew of their daily errand signalling to them excitedly from a little distance, and a moment later he came back with the news that some French soldiers were coming in with a lady. She had been driven up to the outposts by a peasant in a market-wagon, — a small flag of truce conspicuously displayed, — and had shown them papers which she wished to have examined by the officer

in charge. Jules de Beaumont rode forward, and recognizing Sallie's ulster and hat, hurried to the officer, who was already favorably impressed by the regular aspect of the papers, and gave him his word of honor as a patriot and a soldier that it was all right. In the mean time the friendly soldier had officiously conducted the pretended Sallie, whom our readers have doubtless recognized as Captain Müller in disguise, to the carriage. The new-comer was fairly inside, enthusiastically greeted, and the horses' heads were turned toward Paris, before Melicent discovered her mistake.

"How is this?" she exclaimed. "We took you for a friend of ours; but you are not Sallie after all. Alice, tell Alphonse to stop, and let this lady alight. It is all a mistake."

"My dear young lady," exclaimed the stranger, "I beg you will not stop until you have heard my explanation. I am a friend of Miss Benton, and come directly from her, as her cloak and hat and passports will prove. My necessity was greater than hers, and she nobly furnished me the means for entering Paris, which I could not have done without her aid. I have an aged grandmother in the city, from whom I was separated, as I was a governess at Ferrière; and unfortunately I am of German descent and had no papers of any kind with me. My grandmother is very old, and an invalid; my last news from her bade me hasten to her at once, as she was distracted for my safety and her own. But the summons came too late; I could find no means of reaching her or communicating with her until I met your friend. I would not have accepted her kindness were she not perfectly safe and comfortable where she is. I beg you will not think too meanly of me. Even now my dear old grandmother may be dying."

Melicent was silent, but Alice spoke up impulsively: "Such self-sacrifice was like our Sallie. But now we cannot hope to see her until the siege is ended."

"It is strange that she did not mention you in her last letter," Melicent remarked; while Captain Müller wondered what these

"ONE OF THESE STARED AT THEM AS THEY PASSED."

words meant. Her last letter! Then Miss Benton had some means unknown to him of communicating with her friends. This was a complication which he had not foreseen.

"Had she started for Versailles when you left?" asked Alice.

This question perplexed him still more, but he answered truthfully that he had left her with Mère Babette, and had not known of her intention of leaving Ferrières.

"Where would you like to have us leave you?" was the next embarrassing question; but this time it was Melicent who assisted him out of his predicament, by saying, "If you are not in too great haste I wish you would come home with us first and see my mother; she will be so anxious to hear the latest news from Sallie."

MADAME DUVAL.

Arrived at their door, they led the stranger directly to their apartment; but Madame Duval, who was always writing at her counter in the restaurant (Melicent was sure that she had a contract with Alexandre Dumas for writing his novels), looked up as they passed, and catching the flash of the scarlet feather, reported to her clients during the day that, "*Miracle des miracles*, Mademoiselle Sallie had returned herself in safety."

Mrs. Davenport was disappointed; but sacrificing herself for another was so exactly what might have been expected of Sallie, that she was not at all suspicious, and after a short conversation Alphonse was again summoned to take their visitor (who had introduced herself as Miss Miller) wherever she desired.

Alphonse returned an hour later, saying that she had desired him to leave her near the Hôtel de Ville; whereat Melicent remarked that that was an odd residence for the old grandmother.

"There are some very old and poor houses in that quarter," suggested Alice; "perhaps she was ashamed of her relative's poverty, and did not wish Alphonse to see exactly where she lives."

That evening, as they were quietly reading their papers around the lamp, the party were surprised by the reappearance of Miss Miller. She burst into tears on entering, and it was some time before she could explain that she had arrived too late, and the old grandmother was dead. "And now," she added, "I wish that I had remained outside; for I am friendless and homeless, and have no idea where to go. Will you not use your influence with your landlady to let me hire a room here until I can obtain permission to leave Paris?"

"Since Sallie's departure we have taken Alice into our own apartment," said Mrs. Davenport, "and you are welcome to use the studio at night if it will serve you. It has an alcove bed and is comfortable, though rather lonely."

The friendless girl accepted this offer with alacrity. She seemed so modest and retiring, so overwhelmed by her position, that the party felt a strong interest in her. Melicent accompanied her in shopping expeditions, for she seemed to have plenty of money, and resolutely declined to accept the girls' offers of clothing. She seemed to have no definite notion of what she needed, buying whatever Melicent suggested,—and the latter thought her a remarkably unsophisticated girl.

Alice had a permit which allowed of her sketching in certain quarters, and Miss Miller, who drew passably, frequently accompanied her. She seemed especially interested in the fortifications, and made notes of the cannon, which she said she intended to use some time in a large picture. And so it happened that the stranger was indefinately domiciled with them.

The situation was partly explained to Madame Duval, to Jules de Beaumont, and to Mr. Osborne; but the other habitués of the restaurant were confirmed in their opinion that Sallie had returned. Neither Madame Duval nor Mr. Osborne knew exactly where they had made

the acquaintance of this new friend, but imagined that she was some forlorn American who had found herself alone in Paris and had been admitted to their company. Jules de Beaumont alone knew that she had come to them from outside the lines, and at present he was so deeply occupied by his own affairs that he gave the matter no consideration.

CLEMENCE POURING CHOCOLATE.

It so happened that while Melicent was explaining the story to Jules on the next evening after Miss Miller's arrival, the young Frenchman having called to return Sallie's passports, which had been left at the barrière, he had a reflected view in the mirror of Clemence in the next room pouring chocolate.

Melicent was just saying that their new friend was German, and this circumstance might have excited his suspicions had not that familiar profile suddenly dawned upon his vision. His brain reeled, and his eyes nearly started from his head. Clemence was here, — Clemence, whom he had sought for so long and so vainly. Melicent, who finished her explanations, asked if he would like to be introduced to Miss Miller; but Jules showed by his confused expression that he had not heard what she was saying.

"I beg your pardon," he stammered, blushing violently.

"I asked if you would like to meet her," Melicent repeated somewhat stiffly.

"*Mais, certainement*," Jules exclaimed eagerly, hoping that she might be speaking of Clemence; and Melicent left the room to invite Miss Miller to come down.

As Alice was sitting near, Jules was unable to rush into the next room as he would have liked to do; and by a strong effort of will he

withdrew his gaze from the mirror and tried to reply coherently to Alice's remarks.

"Poor young man!" thought Alice; "how deeply he is in love with Melicent, and she does not care for him in the least."

Meantime Melicent had tapped and entered at the studio door. She found Miss Miller seated at a table in a rather masculine attitude, gazing intently at Sallie's portrait.

"Is it not good?" Melicent asked. "Alice painted it; she is very clever, — but we do not think the expression natural. It is sentimental, and no one can imagine our Sallie that."

To Melicent's surprise, the German girl replied with a sigh.

"You are lonely," Melicent said kindly. "We have company downstairs; will you not join us?"

"*Ah, Fraülein, bitte;* you know I am in grief, and would rather not see society."

"This is only the friend who helped get you through the lines; he is a very inoffensive young man, who falls in love with every lady whom he meets. That dress is so becoming to you, that if you will let me fasten this lace fichu about you I shall be anxious to see what impression you will make on his susceptible heart. Your blue eyes and your short, curling, blond hair make such a different appearance from that of most French girls, that you are really very bewitching."

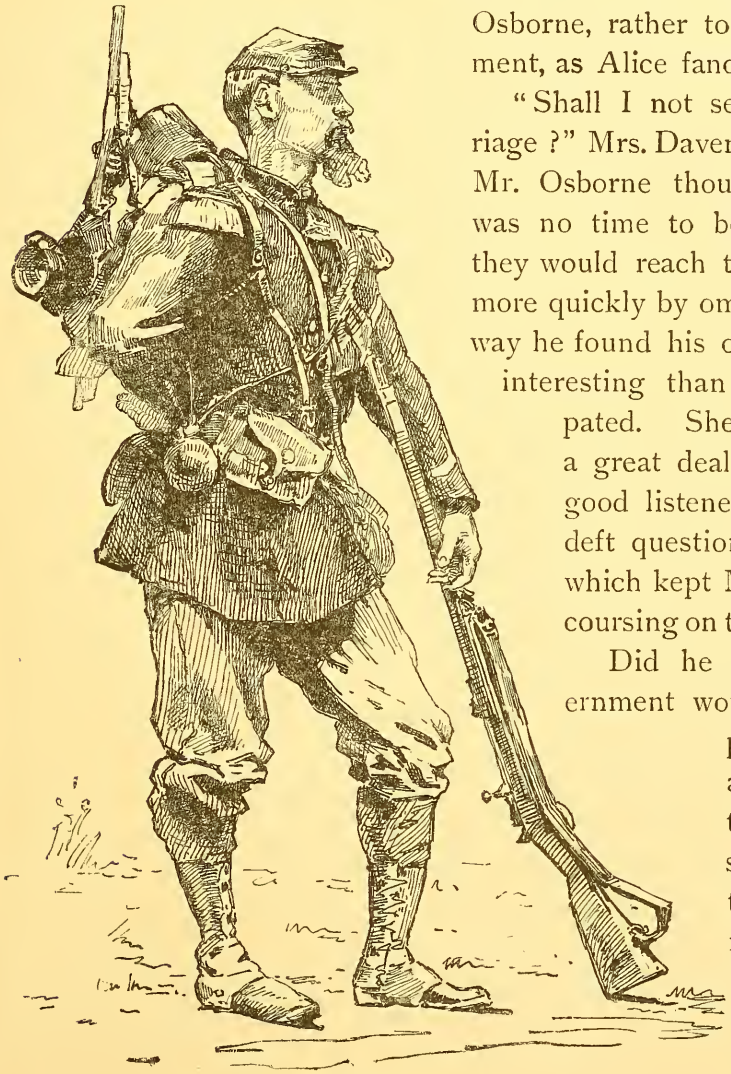
Miss Miller smiled in spite of herself, and descended with Melicent to Mrs. Davenport's salon. Alice had seated herself at the piano, and Miss Miller followed, proving herself a brilliant pianist.

"I have played for Liszt," she said simply, in reply to their compliments.

Later in the evening Mr. Osborne dropped in on his way to the Gare du Nord to witness a balloon ascension.

"I shall send my newspaper letters by it," he said, tapping a large packet which protruded from a pocket of his overcoat. "A night ascension is an interesting spectacle. I should be happy to take any of you with me who would like to see it."

Miss Miller and Melicent immediately expressed their desire to witness the event; and Jules de Beaumont offering his escort to Melicent, Miss Miller was left to Mr. Osborne, rather to his disappointment, as Alice fancied.



ON DUTY.

"Shall I not send for the carriage?" Mrs. Davenport asked; but Mr. Osborne thought that there was no time to be lost, and that they would reach their destination more quickly by omnibus. On the way he found his companion more interesting than he had anticipated. She did not talk a great deal, but she was a good listener, throwing in a deft question now and then which kept Mr. Osborne discoursing on the state of Paris.

Did he think the Government would hold to its policy, "Neither an inch of our territory nor a stone of our fortresses," — the reply rendered with so much spirit to the offered peace on the conditions named at the council at Ferrières?

"Yes," replied Mr. Osborne, "it is my opinion that they will stick it out. M. Gambetta calls upon us to die for our country, and our entire populace seem to be in a heroic frame of mind."

"It is easy to vaunt and bluster," replied Miss Miller; "but will they really fight?"

"I think so. The Mobiles ask nothing better; the Nationaux will make soldiers too, after the gilt is worn off their uniforms. We have four hundred and fifty thousand soldiers in Paris, and five hundred thousand more able-bodied men. Paris will fight."

"But suppose the Prussians do not. Let us imagine that they avoid all engagements, but simply cut off supplies and rely on the grand marshal from within the city, Hunger, to co-operate with them."

"Paris is very well provisioned; we have abundance of food for two months, and in two months we shall have our Grand Marshal attacking the Prussians outside."

"I see you rely on the army of the Loire getting between the Prussians and Germany."

"No, I place very little reliance on reinforcements of that kind; but the grand marshal Winter is perfectly certain to arrive, and the Prussians will find that camping in the open is not such a holiday affair about Christmas-time."

Miss Miller was silent. They had reached the railway station, where by the light of a circle of engine headlights the great balloon, as it slowly filled, was swelling and wallowing, as Melicent said, like restless young giants kicking at their bed-clothes. The aeronaut, pale but resolute, stood by his basket receiving packages which were brought him; sand-bags were piled into the basket, ropes, instruments, a lunch-hamper, blankets, and other articles were handed in. At the last moment a messenger hurried in with despatches from the Corps Diplomatique. Miss Miller started.

"If that balloon should fall into the hands of the Prussians—" she said, half to herself.

"There is a good sou'westerly wind blowing," replied Mr. Osborne. "It is more likely to sail clear over the heads of the besiegers and land somewhere in Belgium."

Miss Miller made some more inquiries as to the price of balloons, where they could be obtained, and the cost of sending letters in this

"IT WAS A DRUM-CORPS OF BOYS."

way. The balloon had filled, and was tugging at its moorings. The aeronaut and another gentleman stepped into the wicker car and gave the order, "*Laissez aller!*" The last rope was loosed, some sand-bags

thrown out, and the balloon shot up into the starry heavens; the crowd of on-lookers cheered, and quietly dispersed.

As the party returned, Melicent remarked on the gloominess of the streets, usually so brilliant in the evening.

"They are economizing the gas," Mr. Osborne replied. "Only one street lamp in every six is lighted now."

"It seems very unnatural to be without lights and music in Paris," said Jules.

"There is music, now," remarked Melicent. It was a drum-corps of boys, merely tapping their drums — step, step — as they came down the boulevard; but as they passed they began to sing, —

"Allons, enfants de la patrie."

"*Pauvres gamins*," said Miss Miller; "for some of you *le jour de gloire* will come all too soon." Shortly after she remarked, "I do not understand how it is that provisions are not much higher, and entirely out of the reach of the poor."

"The Government regulates the distribution of meat," Mr. Osborne explained. "A certain number of animals are killed daily; the meat is divided among the butchers according to the number of their customers. Tickets are issued to heads of families, and they can purchase only as much as their tickets call for; while the very poor are provided with a small share of bread and meat gratis."

On reaching home, the spy bade the others good-night and ascended to the studio. He paced the room for a time, in deep thought. He had found it comparatively easy to get into Paris, but how was he ever to get out? His situation for the present was both safe and pleasant. Moreover, he was in a position to collect much important information. His plan for sending this information to the Prussians was to provide himself, in Paris, with small balloons, not large or strong enough to go very far, and to send these off at intervals with packets addressed to the Prussian headquarters. They would proba-

bly come to the ground somewhere within the Prussian lines, and the letters would reach their destination.

He realized now that the purchase of such small balloons, if possible, would be considered a very suspicious circumstance, and he could think of no means of getting his despatches to the Crown Prince. Suddenly it occurred to him that the girls had unguardedly spoken, on the day of his arrival, of a letter received from Sallie. Was there some regular means of communication between them? He could hardly believe it possible, for if so, they would have discovered his fraud; but how had the letter of which they spoke been brought to them? He determined to question Alice the next day, but he must be very cautious. In the mean time he would take a look at the loft overhead, and see if the roof was easy of access for the sending off of balloons in case he was able to obtain them. As he entered the loft his lighted candle disturbed the pigeons, and their nestling and cooing surprised him; for as they were caged he had not heretofore been aware of their presence. He saw that they were kept in three coops; the largest was filled with ordinary doves, and the two smaller, as he attentively observed them, he was sure contained carriers. An idea suddenly struck him: those pigeons which so excited Sallie's anxiety at Ferrières must also be carriers; and here was the key to the mystery. A little more diligent scrutiny disclosed the fact that one of the coops was marked in chalk, "Dieppe," and the other, "F." This latter, he argued, must contain the carriers for Ferrières. He was about to return to the studio, when he noticed a pigeon roosting alone upon a barrel in one corner of the loft. The roof contained several unglazed dormer windows, and he comprehended that this pigeon had arrived since any one interested had visited the loft. He caught the bird without difficulty, and found a message wrapped around the central tail-feather and securely fastened by means of sewing-silk. He unwrapped the message and read: —

VERSAILLES, September 25.

DEAR MRS. DAVENPORT, — I arrived safely at Villa Beaumont this morning. Madame la Comtesse is very kind. Any message sent by pigeon-post to Ferrières will be brought to me here. Lovingly,

SALLIE.

Captain Müller carefully replaced the missive and descended to the studio, greatly pleased by his discoveries.

AN UNWELCOME DISCOVERY.

There was nothing of a political nature in Sallie's letter, and he at once concluded that the correspondence was a merely personal one; for he had yet to discover the résumé of his conversation with her on the council of war, which report still rested undiscovered in one of the pockets of the ulster. It struck him that here was an excellent way of mailing his despatches. He wrote late into the night, making reductions of the maps which he had drawn of the different redoubts, on the thinnest of paper, and copying only the most important parts of his report in the finest short-hand. He enclosed these papers in a short letter to Sallie, which ran as follows: —

PARIS, September 26.

DEAREST FRAÜLEIN, — I am in Paris, a spy, and I owe my present safety to you. I throw myself upon your mercy. Do not mention me in any letter to your friends; but if you would do me a great kindness, take the enclosed papers to the secretary of the Crown Prince, and you will be liberally rewarded. "Wenn i' wiedrum komm" all shall be explained, and I pledge myself to effect your safe return to your friends. Heartily yours,

ERNST MÜLLER.

Carefully concealing the papers, he slept for a few hours; but as the first streak of dawn reddened the eastern sky, he slipped into a

wrapper, climbed to the loft, and fastening his despatches to one of the Ferrières pigeons, sent it on its way. He had just time to return, and was standing with his hand on the studio door, when James Osborne passed him on his way to the loft.

"A lucky escape!" he muttered to himself. "What if he had caught me sending off the bird? I am afraid my appearance was hardly as trim as a young lady's should be."

As he proceeded in a leisurely way to make his toilet, and surveyed himself carelessly in the little hand-glass, he started suddenly, then gazed more earnestly, while an expression of deep apprehension overspread his face. He had brought no shaving materials with him, and his mustache and beard were beginning to grow.

CHAPTER VI.

AT VERSAILLES.

SOME French sharp-shooters had made a sortie from Fort Bicêtre; and as Sallie approached Sceaux, on her roundabout way from Ferrières to Versailles, she saw the puffs and wreaths of smoke from their guns, as they lay hidden behind hillocks and stumps. Mère Babette wisely turned far to the left, and they reached Villa Beaumont without further incident. Here Sallie was most hospitably received by the Countess, who had met her in Paris, and who had become much interested in the Americans through her husband's letters, which had been filled with their praises. As the Comte de Beaumont was an indefatigable correspondent, keeping a journal, which he mailed to his wife in semi-weekly instalments until mail communication was cut off, Madame de Beaumont was well informed concerning the tastes, intelligence, good-breeding, kindness of heart, and bravery of our friends, all of which the Count enlarged upon ecstatically. What interested Madame still more, was the fact that her son, who after the disappearance of Clemence had pronounced himself a woman-hater, showed by an occasional allusion to the young American ladies, that they had roused a languid and melancholy interest in a heart which he supposed to be damaged beyond repair.

Madame de Beaumont shared her husband's opinions in regard to the advisability of an American marriage for Jules, and she was curious to ascertain which of the three young ladies — any one of whom she considered eligible under the circumstances — was most favored by her son and most kindly disposed to him. Therefore when Sallie presented herself at the villa, though she was as unexpected, as Madame expressed it, as if she had descended herself from the heavens, she was still very welcome; and when her guest explained that all she begged was temporary shelter until she could either rejoin her friends or go to England, Madame, although protesting that she would do everything in her power to forward Sallie's wishes, was inwardly grateful that there was no immediate prospect of their realization. As Sallie wished most ardently to enter Paris, she made no immediate attempt to leave the country; and as she knew that to effect her desire would take time, she was very grateful to the Countess for her hospitality.

The Countess herself was an old woman, very imposing when in full dress; but with her false teeth tucked away in her toilet-case, her gray hair carelessly thrust into a morning-cap, a shapeless gown replacing the whalebone and satin which added so much to her appearance, Sallie could not help thinking that Madame resembled one of the ruined French palaces. It was a grotesque idea, but the same thing had occurred to the Countess.

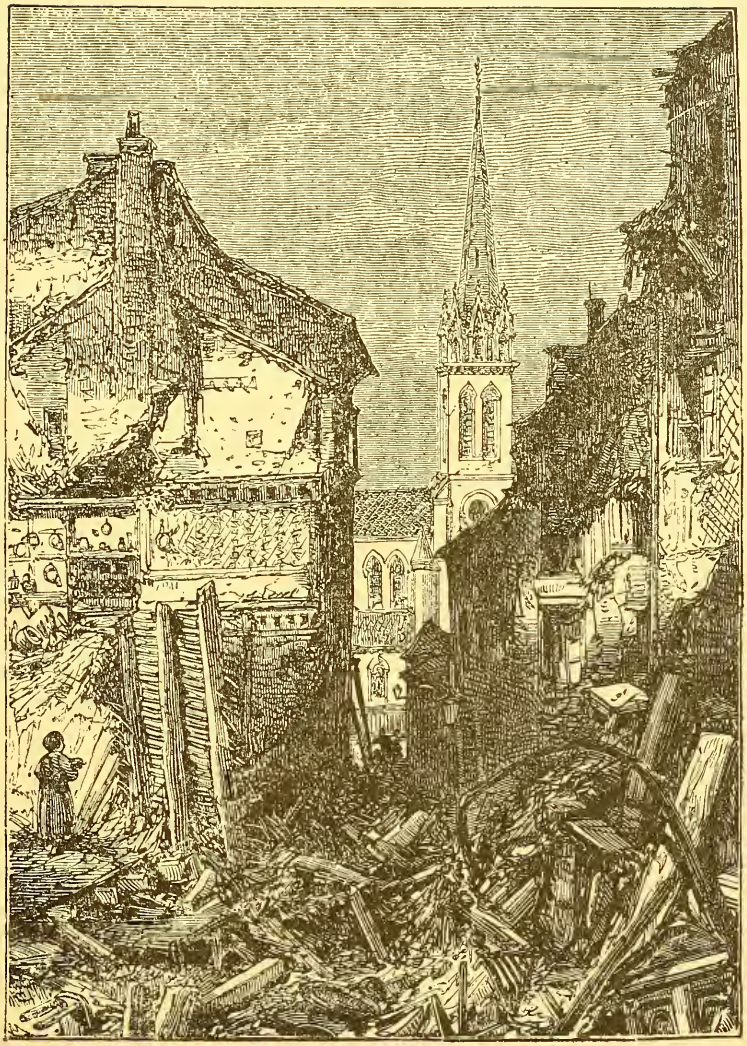
"Now that you have come, *chérie*," she said, "I shall have the courage to assert the dignity of France. I have been too easily discouraged; and feeling that all was lost with the Imperial family, have abandoned myself to the desolation of *négligé*. I should have had more character, and have shown the invaders that *la patrie* never dies. Ah! if I only had my clever little maid Clemence, she would design a costume and a coiffure appropriate to this occasion."

Madame took down her cap-box, and began the construction of a head-dress which should express her ideas of the suitable. "No

lavender ribbons," she said decisively. "Purple expresses grief, resignation: cardinal stands for patriotism, courage, *verve;* cardinal it shall be;" and Madame displayed her principles by loading her cap with every scrap of red in the bandbox.

THE COUNTESS.

The villa was charmingly situated on a little eminence, which gave it a wide outlook. The Palace of Versailles, with its parks and gardens, was near at hand; to the left St. Cloud and Sèvres were plainly visible, and on the right, the heights of Meudon were a continuation of the range of hills on which Villa Beaumont was built. The Seine made a long loop below them, enclosing the Bois de Boulogne, guarded by the forts of Mont Valérien on the west and d'Issy on the east; while all the spires and domes of Paris were spread out in beautiful panorama in the distance. The sun glittered on the gilded dome of the Invalides (the asylum of Napoleon's veterans), and she could distinctly make out the Luxembourg and its gardens. Somewhere between those two points were her friends. (See map inside cover.) This view was obtained from the roof of the villa; for the garden was surrounded, in the French fashion, with a high stone wall and a row of poplar-trees, which effectually cut off the magnificent scene, even from the second-story windows.



RUINS OF ST. CLOUD.

Every morning Sallie repaired to the roof, taking with her a good spy-glass which had been found in Monsieur's study, and was handed her by Jacques the butler, who was now man-of-all-work; the other servants having deserted the villa, with the exception of Pierre the gardener, Mère Babette's brother, who was still at the gate lodge, and to whose care Sallie intrusted the few carrier pigeons which were still left her.

Madame pointed out to her the ruins of the Palace of St. Cloud. "They need never try," she said, "to make me believe that the French destroyed it. Of course it was the Prussians; no Frenchmen would have bombarded the favorite residence of the Empress. Ah, you should have seen it when she resided there! Many a time have I been honored by invitations to the palace, and once she attended a fête under this very roof. I have guarded sacredly the spoon with which she stirred her *eau sucré*, the tiny glass from which she sipped curaçoa, the fauteuil in which she sat. But the fauteuil, which I have ever since regarded as the throne of an empress, I forgot (in the haste with which I vacated our principal apartments to the invaders) to remove, and that great bear, Colonel von Lindenthal, has appropriated it to his obnoxious person. I had Jacques bring it upstairs and substitute another; but the impious one ordered it returned to the billiard-room, as he had taken a fancy to it. Figure to yourself the sacrilege!"

To Madame's disappointment, Sallie was more interested in Versailles than in St. Cloud. It was very tantalizing not to be able to visit it; but this was impossible, as it was now a Prussian hospital. Like Captain Müller, she longed to see everything connected with the history of Marie Antoinette, especially the dairy in the park, where the child-queen played at being a milkmaid. Sallie wondered to what use the Prussians would put the Salon de la Guerre, in the grand palace, with its ceiling by Lebrun, representing France chastising Spain, Holland, and Germany; and how, she asked

Madame de Beaumont, would they enjoy the Galerie de l'Empire, with its great canvases representing the exploits of Napoleon I., the battle of Marengo, and the Passage of the Great St. Bernard, and the Grand Galerie des Batailles, and the suite dedicated to the "Amiraux et Maréchaux de France"?

"*C'est ça*," replied Madame, smiling grimly. "*On parlera de sa gloire.* They do well to fit up the long galleries for the wounded; they will have need of all the room. But to think of those beasts of Prussians occupying them, and grazing in the royal park, smoking their pipes and eating their sausages in the presence of our beautiful statuary, as though it were a beer-garden! It is that which I find unbearable."

"Even if they are wounded?" Sallie suggested.

"Even if they are wounded!" Madame replied. "They should be taken care of by the society for the prevention of cruelty to animals, and well stabled, but not in our palace."

It was by such outbursts as this that Madame relieved her mind in private, for she was the unwilling hostess of a colonel of Uhlans with his officers. These gentlemen had taken possession of the principal rooms of the villa, leaving to Madame the suite in the Mansard formerly occupied by the servants. Hitherto Madame had preferred to confine herself to this floor; but on Sallie's arrival she decided to maintain the appearance of still being mistress of her own house. She accordingly sent word to the Colonel, that with his permission Madame would preside at the meals served in the general dining-room, and that Mademoiselle would accompany her. The Countess did not ignore the fact that the table was furnished by the officers' rations, and the food cooked by German soldiers. It was a humiliating thing, doubtless, to be fed by the enemy; but Madame felt that in lodging them she gave ample compensation for the sustenance of herself and household; and meagre indeed would have been the fare which she could have offered her guest, but

for the invaders. Pierre had a store of potatoes, and Jacques filled the decanters with *vin ordinaire;* but the markets of Versailles presented a melancholy array of empty hooks, for the beeves and flocks of the country round had been driven to Paris. The Prussian

WOUNDED GERMANS IN THE PARK AT VERSAILLES.

commissary department, however, was wide-reaching and active, and the table at the villa groaned with huge joints and mammoth pasties.

Colonel von Lindenthal was a great burly man, with a gruff voice and a soft heart. He was pleased to have the ladies at the table, though he had no faith in Madame's politeness, while Sallie puzzled him exceedingly. He assured Madame, on his arrival, that his stay

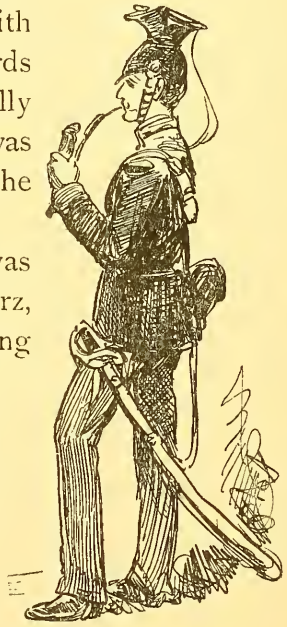
would be short; the Germans would be in Paris in three weeks. But the three weeks lengthened themselves to six; and now he could no longer find in the garden the violets, which he enclosed every week in his letters to his worthy Frau. He liked to walk in the handsome garden, Pierre's pride, and he sharply reproved some of the young officers who galloped across the pansy-bed. Sallie was sure that he was kind and good, for she saw him one morning making friends with Pierre's youngest child, a mere snip of a little girl, who had been told that the colonel was a great bear, but who put her little hand confidingly in his great one on seeing the merry twinkle in his eye, and said trustingly, "*Tu n'es pas un ours, toi*, because you have no fur and no claws."

The autumn wind had whistled down the yellow leaves, and Colonel von Lindenthal now wore a fur coat in his garden promenades; but Lisette was still sure that he was not a bear, for he gave her candies, and chucked her under the chin with his meerschaum. Still, this was only his occasional aspect, and Sallie was conscious that the atmosphere about her was one of grim war. Orderlies were constantly coming and going, troops marched by or were reviewed in sight of their windows, and from her outlook on the roof Sallie could see the redoubts and forts which the Prussians were constructing. Nor was this all; fighting had actually begun. She would never forget the first *boom*, *boom*, of heavy artillery, and Pierre's excited face as he told her that there had been a skirmish only two miles away. Later, she became accustomed to such sounds, and learned to distinguish the reports of the mitrailleuses, and to judge from the white cloud-bursts how far away a shell had fallen. In these days she could hardly tell which side claimed her sympathies most. When Colonel von Lindenthal announced at table that a regiment of Flensburg Hussars had been surprised at Rambouillet by Franctireurs, and cut to pieces, Madame's look of exultation seemed to her absolutely fiendish, and she could not help expressing her sorrow.

THE BABE AND THE BUGBEAR.

But when Mathilde came flying in one afternoon in October to say that a sortie from Paris was in progress in the direction of St. Cloud and Bougival, and that if successful the French soldiers might march into Versailles before nightfall, she was almost as wildly excited as Madame; and she would have greeted Jules de Beaumont with genuine delight if he had charged up the avenue at the head of his cuirassiers. Often her unsettled feelings expressed themselves in controversy, and she argued with Madame in favor of the Germans, or crossed swords with Colonel von Lindenthal until he was really angry. There came a morning when she was obliged to ask herself seriously with which side she was to be identified.

She had happened to mention that she was fond of horseback riding; and Lieutenant Schwarz, one of the younger officers, had in his foraging expeditions possessed himself of a side-saddle, which he placed on his own horse and begged her to use. Sallie was a little surprised at this attention, for she had an idea that Lieutenant Schwarz did not like her. He watched her narrowly, and weighed all her chance remarks in what seemed to her no friendly manner.



LIEUTENANT SCHWARZ.

"Yes, come with us for a gallop," said the Colonel; "I am going over to visit the ruins of the Palace of St. Cloud, which the French have themselves destroyed because they imagined that we were making it a strategic point. As though we could not plant our batteries just as well in its ruins!"

Sallie needed no second invitation; and though Madame looked her disapproval, she nevertheless produced a riding-skirt and assisted Sallie in making a becoming appearance. Away cantered the party, the young officer who had furnished the horse and saddle following

in the Colonel's suite, swords and armor jingling, the air clear and cold, — for the rain-clouds had lifted, — and the hoofs clattering on the stony pavements. Sallie's horse was disposed to resent the petticoat at first; but the Colonel laid his hand on the bridle, and he obeyed the leader's hand. Once out of Versailles they found the roads cut into ruts by the passing of heavy artillery, and the mud horrible. They passed Sèvres, with its world-renowned porcelain factory partly demolished, the studio of the Director, the father of Henri Regnault the artist, destroyed, and the guard, recognizing the Colonel, allowed them to pass on to St. Cloud. Here whole streets were converted into long lines of débris, ghastly walls standing here and there where Eugénie's beautiful palace had been. The Colonel dismounted before a cave inside a redoubt, and invited Sallie to enter. "You will find it interesting," he said, and so it was. The cave was the sleeping-apartment of the men, and it had been furnished with articles from the palace, — gilt and satin fauteuils, muddy with the marks of riding-boots, beautiful branching candelabra containing tallow-dips, and an upright piano forming a part of the barricade.

"Would you like a souvenir of St. Cloud?" asked one of the soldiers; and he handed her a broken Sèvres saucer with a gilt N surmounted by a crown on one side.

While they stood chatting, the boom of the cannon sounded very near.

"Those are the big guns of Mont Valérien," said one of the men. "They fire constantly, but they seldom hit anything. The gunboats on the Seine do more damage. It is not altogether safe just here. We are all eager for permission to begin our side of the bombardment."

As he spoke, a bomb burst near them and killed one of the horses belonging to the party, and which an orderly was holding. It was only a horse; but it was a sickening sight, and Sallie turned pale.

ST. CLOUD AFTER THE BOMBARDMENT.

"We will go home," said the Colonel; "I had no idea that things were so lively here this morning, or I would not have brought you."

As they were returning, a balloon from Paris sailed over their heads, at a not very great distance above them.

"Something is the matter," said the Colonel; "it will come to the ground soon. Suppose we give chase."

The balloon drifted in the direction of a long road leading toward Rambouillet, and down this the party raced, taking to the fields after a time.

"I have ridden to hounds in England," said Sallie to the Colonel, "and have been buffalo-hunting in Kansas, but have never chased a balloon before."

The acronauts, two in number, were seen to throw out ballast. One of the Uhlans fired several pistol-shots into the air.

"Don't let him kill the men!" gasped Sallie; but she saw presently that he was only aiming at the balloon. The gas was escaping through the rents made by the shots, and it was settling to the ground. The two *voyageurs* were immediately seized and marched away at the Colonel's orders. A mail-bag taken from the car he ordered to be carried to the villa, and the party turned again toward Versailles.

"What will be done with the men, Colonel?" Sallie ventured to ask.

"Treated as spies," was the short reply.

"Not hanged?" Sallie asked aghast.

"Why not? They were going to Tours to arrange for aid and comfort for the enemy. These letters will implicate them sufficiently to condemn them before any military tribunal. Schwarz here will carry them, and accompany you to the villa. I must go on to Count von Bismarck's lodgings. If you will look over these letters in the mean time, and lay those which appear to be official by themselves, I will be greatly obliged. I do not read French readily, and there is no need of my wading through private and family correspondence."

Sallie rode home much saddened. She had only had the mildest

possible suggestion of war, and yet it seemed to her a very horrible thing. The struggles of the dying horse, the blood, the noise of the bursting shell, were all very vividly impressed on her mind, and the sight of the white faces of the two Frenchmen led away to their death was still more suggestive.

"You are pale," said Lieutenant Schwarz, as he helped her to dismount. "The ride has tired you."

Sallie hardly noticed the remark, but sat down in the billiard-room, which Colonel von Lindenthal used as an office, and buried herself in the intercepted letters. What a revelation they were of the state of affairs in Paris, — not alone the communications to the "Government of National Defence" in Tours, but the private letters from separated members of families! She knew that many of these letters would implicate people supposed to be non-combatants, and a temptation seized her to suppress some of them, in spite of a conviction that in doing so she would be violating the confidence which Colonel von Lindenthal was placing in her. How hard it was to tell just what was right! As she read on in her uncertainty the tears welled to her eyes, and she shoved her chair suddenly from the table, feeling that she had no right to spy into private histories, especially where suffering and sorrow rendered them sacred. Resolutely she held her hands and sat staring at the heap of unopened letters, while she wondered whether, after all, it was best to let such an opportunity go by unimproved. After a time the Colonel entered, followed by a soldier bearing the German mail-bag bulging with many strange objects sent him by his good Frau; a fur-lined foot-muff (in which he might insert his toes while writing his despatches, a sensible precaution against colds in this unwarmed and draughty villa), together with various drinkables and eatables which were sent to the butler's pantry.

He gave Sallie a keen glance. "You have not made much headway with the letters," he said. "I should have thought that woman's curiosity might have carried you further."

Sallie told him her feeling of delicacy at reading letters not intended for her eye, indicated the political papers, and begged that the others might be destroyed unopened. The Colonel listened attentively.

"You are a high-minded girl," he replied; "I would not have believed it possible for a woman with French sympathies to neglect such an opportunity for assisting her friends. I have watched you all the time from my bedroom yonder. That transom lined with black silk reflects as perfectly as a mirror everything that is done at this table. You have not attempted to destroy or secrete a single paper. After this, I trust you wholly. You are not the sort of woman to make a spy."

Sallie crimsoned. "What must I think of you, Colonel von Lindenthal, for having acted the spy with me?" she asked archly.

"We men are not so nice in our code as we would have women be; and some one — no matter who — has advised me to watch you," he replied, smiling. "I am sorry that I cannot indulge your request to have these letters burned; I have decided that I must send the bag as it is to headquarters. And now will you kindly order dinner, for my ride has given me a keen appetite?"

Not so to poor Sallie. The excitement of the day had brought the color temporarily to her cheeks; but as she thought of her friends in the beleaguered city, subsisting on cat and dog ragout, with steaks of horse, — and here the vision of the slaughtered animal came freshly before her mind, — she loathed the fulsome dainties with which their table was loaded: the *Frankfürter blutwurst*, the *paté de foie gras*, the great trout pasty, and the *kirschen-wasser*, which had just been sent from the Fatherland.

She rose from the table almost nauseated, and was about to run upstairs to her turret, when Jacques coughed meaningly and remarked, "If you please, Mademoiselle, Pierre has some tulips at the hot-house which he would like to show you."

"Tulips at this season!" she exclaimed in surprise.

Jacques was seized again with his fit of coughing, and Lieutenant Schwarz wheeled about and beat him with rough kindliness upon his back until he coughed in such good earnest that the tears came to his eyes. Something in their imploring look seemed to say, "Will she insist on not understanding?" And Sallie, nodding reassuringly, went out into the rainy October night to see the tulips.

JACQUES.

There was no one at the greenhouse, but a light shone at the gate lodge. Sallie tried the door, and wondered to find it barred. Pierre opened it presently. "*Voilà, ma tulipe,*" he said, smiling; and there, crouching by the fireplace, in a great cloak, and telling her beads as though she were at church, was Mère Babette.

The good woman was overjoyed at seeing Sallie once more. "I have brought you a box of pills," she said, chuckling, "for your rheumatism;" at the same time handing Sallie a box of a very uninviting appearance.

"But I never have rheumatism," the young girl replied, much mystified.

Mère Babette goggled frightfully in her merriment. "I thought at first of putting it in a *pot de confitures, confitures de cerises,* and then I thought how silly that would be; of course the first guard would insist on eating it; but three of them have smelled of that pill and handed it back to me. That is not the pomade of the Empress that —"

"I should think not," Sallie replied, turning up her nose. "Is it asafœtida?"

"Those pills are made, among other ingredients, of scorched pigeon feathers, — the wing-feathers of carrier pigeons. If Mademoiselle will

BASSIN D'APOLLON.

take them in the privacy of her own apartment, I am sure they will do her rheumatism much good."

Sallie understood at last; but fearing from her experience of that afternoon that she might still be under the espionage of Colonel von Lindenthal, she made no demonstration, but pressed some money upon Mère Babette, and thanked her heartily for the pains she had taken in behalf of her rheumatism.

"I think I have good news for you, Mère Babette," she said, before she left. "I have been thinking over the matter very seriously, and I verily believe that I know your daughter. If she is the Clemence that I am thinking of, she is making her living in Paris honestly and bravely." They talked together, discussing characteristics until each was convinced. "I shall fly one of my pigeons to-morrow," said Sallie, "and I will ask the girls to send you word; the next pigeon-post will surely bring you good tidings."

Mère Babette covered Sallie with blessings, and the young girl reached her room apparently without having been followed or suspected. On pouring the pills into a little lacquer tray which Madame used for her rings, she discovered the tiny packet which had come from Paris by pigeon-post. It was from Mr. Osborne, doubtless, or Mrs. Davenport; but what was her surprise, on removing the casing of gold-beater's skin, to find Captain Müller's maps and report, which he had so confidingly intrusted to her care. In her astonishment she almost laughed aloud. "Colonel von Lindenthal has said that I am not the stuff of which spies are made," she thought to herself; "and if I can resist the temptation of being one for the French, I certainly shall not fill that friendly office for the Germans."

She lighted a waxen taper which the Countess was accustomed to use for sealing letters, and holding the Captain's report in the flame by means of a pair of curling-tongs, prepared to consume the entire packet. A smile which was half at his unsuspecting nature, and half at her own, curled her lips as she performed this *auto-da-fé*.

"So he was a spy all along," she thought, "and he introduced himself into Paris by means of my papers and hat and cloak. He must make a droll-looking girl; how I should like to see him! I wonder whether he resembles me? Surely Mrs. Davenport and the girls do not mistake him for me. He begs I will not mention him when I write. Well, I will not do so if it will endanger his life, but I certainly shall not help him in his profession; and how can I ever pay him off for his effrontery?"

Captain Müller's papers were burning brightly, when Sallie was startled by a noise behind, and looking up into the toilet-glass, she saw Lieutenant Schwarz open the door.

"I beg your pardon, Fraülein," he said, taking the flaming paper from her limp hand and extinguishing it in the ewer; "but I was curious to see these October tulips. That was a very pretty tableau of indifference which you arranged over the letter-bag for Colonel von Lindenthal; but my suspicions are not so easily laid."

"Lieutenant," Sallie could only stammer, "you have no right on this floor, nor to my private correspondence. I shall appeal to the Countess de Beaumont," — the lieutenant smiled sarcastically, — "and to Colonel von Lindenthal."

The Lieutenant elevated his eyebrows. "The Colonel shall decide," he replied airily; "but meantime the letter, what there is left of it, has its little story to tell. You will assure me, doubtless, that this is merely a billet-doux in which I have no concern: young ladies have a habit of burning love-letters, I believe; but the manner in which it was brought was somewhat mysterious, and war must excuse many otherwise unwarrantable liberties."

He touched his hat with mock gallantry and disappeared, leaving Sallie making a vain effort to collect her scattered senses.

CHAPTER VII.

SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES.

CAPTAIN MÜLLER had more reason to be alarmed than amused by the predicament in which he found himself. In some way he must manage to shave, and meantime he must keep strictly hidden. He determined to remain in the studio until he could hear Mr. Osborne leave his room, and then to descend and search his apartment for a razor. Every minute which he passed in Paris was at the risk of his life. There was an over-attentive gendarme standing in front of the Duval restaurant, who always regarded him particularly, and, as it seemed to Captain Müller, suspiciously, when he passed in and out. In point of fact the gendarme was merely expressing a gallant admiration; but the spy's nerves were overstrung, and he felt himself watched by every one. There was still important information to be gathered. He was sure that sorties were planned; if he could learn from Jules de Beaumont in what direction and on what dates, it would be well for him to remain in Paris for some time to come. Oddly enough, he had taken Sallie's co-operation entirely for granted. She was not French, he argued, and could have no scruples against aiding the Germans, especially as in so doing she would secure their consent to her rejoining her friends.

Naturally she would be surprised on learning that he was a spy. She had been so frank and unsuspecting with him, and had so innocently told him just what he wanted to know, that he felt rather ashamed of himself for having taken advantage of her transparent character; but she had seemed so friendly that he was sure he could make his peace with her, and his own mental superiority in having so completely deceived her quite amused him. The chagrin which she would probably feel at being hoodwinked would, he was sure, be accompanied by an appreciation of his own genius, which Captain Müller's vanity led him to think might even amount to admiration. He was conscious that Bavarian fraüleins had considered him a handsome man; he thought it quite possible that he might have seemed so to this young and presumably impressionable American girl. He was quite sure, on the whole, that she would be willing to do him a favor. He had come to consider his theft of her ulster and hat as a voluntary loan on her part, and he carefully shook and brushed the cloak hoping that he had not injured it. As he did so, a paper fell from the pocket. He picked it up and smoothed it out carefully, — for he knew that it had belonged to Sallie, and he intended to preserve it for her, — when something in its appearance struck him. The names of Bismarck and other prominent Germans stared him in the face. Why had Miss Sallie written them down? He opened the paper, feeling that this was something which he had a right to know. What was his astonishment to find that it was a report to Mr. James Osborne of his own conversation in regard to the German Council of War at Ferrières, which Sallie had impulsively made but had not sent. The conclusion was evident: this guileless, unsuspicious American girl was herself a spy, and a very clever one. As he read on, he was mortified to note how he who had just now prided himself on his own superior subtlety had been wax in her hands, and, completely outwitted, had actually confided to her important secrets.

PRUSSIAN PRISONERS.

"*Donnerwetter!*" he exclaimed, ruffling up his hair and holding his head in his hands, "I am indeed a fool!" In his disgust he stamped upon the floor, forgetting how strangely this would sound to Mr. Osborne. The more he thought of the situation the more angry he became. "She has not only perfect communication with French headquarters, but I have betrayed myself into her hands, and have actually sent her my despatches, which the next pigeon-post may wing back to French headquarters with an order for my arrest."

Would Sallie do this? He could hardly believe her so cruel, but the fact remained that he was completely in her power. Safety compelled him to leave Paris at once. He dressed hurriedly, then looking at his reflection in the glass sat down in despair. At that instant some one tapped on the door. Had they already come to arrest him? He looked around desperately for some means of escape, and Alice's gentle voice asked,—

"Are you ill, Miss Miller? Would you like to have your breakfast sent up?"

"Thank you," the Captain replied; "I would like a cup of coffee. I am not feeling very well this morning."

Alice disappeared. "She will be sure to want to come in," thought the distracted Captain; "now, what shall I do?" He muffled his face in a towel and opened the door when Alice returned with a tray.

"What *is* the matter?" the young girl asked sympathetically.

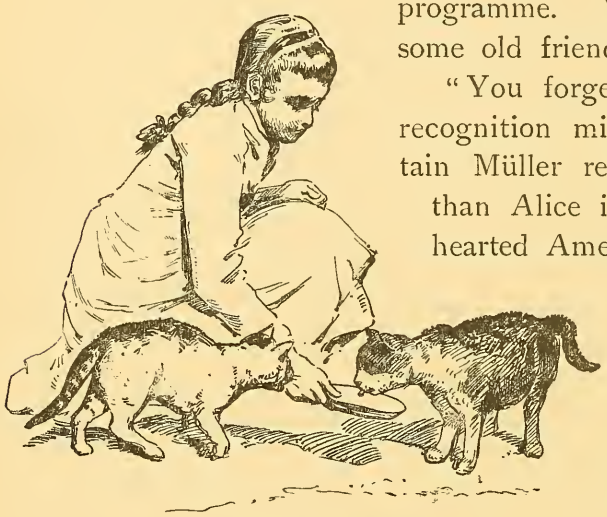
"I think it is neuralgia in the face," the Captain replied mendaciously.

"It does look swollen," Alice remarked; "perhaps it comes from a bad tooth. Do let Mrs. Davenport look at it."

"That will hardly be necessary," said the Captain; "I have applied a mustard plaster. I am sure it will be better soon."

Alice waited a few moments; then seeing that Miss Miller was not inclined to partake of her breakfast while she remained, she apolo-

gized for its meagreness (it consisted only of coffee and a roll), saying that Madame Duval could give them meat only once a day now, and added: "I am so sorry you cannot go out with us this morning. We are going with Mr. Osborne to hear Mass said at the Madeleine before the Breton peasant regiments, the very bravest of our defenders, and on our way back we shall visit the Prussian prisoners. I thought you would enjoy that part of the morning's programme. You might have found some old friends."



CHIFFON AND GOURMET.

"You forget how dangerous such recognition might prove for me," Captain Müller replied, with more reason than Alice imagined; and the kind-hearted American girl reluctantly left the studio.

As she descended the stair she saw a young French girl, Julie Robert, feeding her cats, Chiffon (Rag) and Gourmet (Epicure), in the court. Julie acknowledged the nod of recognition which Alice made her from the hall window.

"Are they not nice and fat?" she asked, pointing to the cats. "Madame Duval has offered me ten francs apiece for them."

"I did not know Madame Duval was fond of pets," Alice replied, in some surprise.

"They are not for pets," Julie replied, "but to make rabbit stew of."

Alice choked. And that delicious *ragout de lapin*, which they had enjoyed at dinner, was actually pussy! How very Chinese their menu was becoming! It made her think of —

"Ping Wing, the Chinaman's son,
The very worst boy in all Canton,
He stole his mother's pickled mice,
And put the cat in the boiling rice;
And when they 'd eaten her, said he,
'Me wonders where that mew-cat be.'"

Soon after Alice had descended, Captain Müller heard James Osborne leave his room, and a little later he saw a cab drive away from the front door. Feeling that now was his opportunity, he silently slipped down one flight of stairs, and finding that Mr. Osborne had left his door unlocked, entered, and after a little search discovered a razor, which he immediately appropriated, and hastily left the apartment. As he did so, the door at the other end of the entry opened, and he found himself face to face with Alphonse, who was hurrying downstairs to drive the party to the Madeleine, the cab which had just left the door not having been Mrs. Davenport's carriage, as Captain Müller had too hastily imagined.

ALPHONSE RELATES HIS SUSPICIONS.

Alphonse was much surprised and even scandalized at seeing the young German lady issue from Mr. Osborne's room. He could not imagine why she had her head muffled in so extraordinary a way, and the razor in her hand did not escape his notice.

The footman had a tragic imagination, and he immediately concocted a half-dozen different romances and tragedies, all having for their main plot the idea that Miss Miller wished either to murder

some one, or to commit suicide. Accordingly he called on Mr. Osborne that evening and communicated his observations. The young newspaper correspondent was more amused than alarmed.

"She does not look like a murderess," he said; "let us wait a little and see if she returns my razor, and whether she takes anything else. Perhaps she is a kleptomaniac, and has a passion for pilfering."

AT BOURGET.

Alphonse, feeling that he had not enough evidence to make out a case, determined to say nothing at present to the ladies about his suspicions, but to keep a good watch on the stranger, and to caution Clemence to lock up very carefully at night. Captain Müller, after deliberate consideration of the risks, determined to remain, keeping a strict watch, however, on the pigeon-post, and reading every despatch from Sallie before it reached the eye of James Osborne. Having used the razor to good effect, he appeared at dinner in his assumed character, and casually remarked to Alphonse at their next meeting that he had looked into Mr. Osborne's room because he fancied he detected the smell of something burning. He looked so girlishly innocent that the footman's suspicions gradually relaxed. He nevertheless took the

precaution to stretch some threads across the studio door that evening after Miss Miller retired; but as he found them unbroken early the next morning, he was convinced that the strange young woman had not left her room, and matters went on at the Maison Duval for some time quite as usual.

Captain Müller made his observations during the day, but did not hazard sending them away. The policy of Jules Favre to hold out and surrender *ni un pouce du territoire, ni une pierre des fortresses*, seemed to be heartily sustained by the citizens; and he perceived that it would be a harder thing for the Prussians to take Paris than they had at first imagined. Even when the Prussians obtained by force what the French would not yield by treaty, and Strasbourg and Toul had fallen, the Parisians were not disheartened. It was evident that they anticipated the possibility of an assault; for not only was the Bois de Boulogne fortified, but the Avenue de l'Impératrice was blocked with barricades and ditches, and made impassable for cavalry with just such contrivances as Cæsar describes in his Gallic Wars, — holes at brief intervals, with pointed stakes fastened in the centre.

Then came the affair of Bourget, on the north of Paris, — at first a victory for the French, the village having been taken by Franc-tireurs and Mobiles, on the 28th of October; but two days later they were routed by the Germans, with a loss of over five hundred French.

Jules de Beaumont understood now that the campaign for which he had enlisted was not a mere holiday parade, but grim war. He had not yet been called into action; but he tasted the rigors and privations of a soldier's life, of much guard duty, of sleeping in the open, of hard fare, and the consciousness of ever-present danger. The Maison Duval saw him less frequently, the gilt was worn from his uniform, he had grown brown and lean, and Melicent ceased to make fun of him; he had developed from a popinjay into something

very like a man. The Count visited them frequently, and talked much about his son, who, he said, had definitely made up his mind to seek his fortunes in America as soon as the war was over.

Mrs. Davenport attempted in vain to discourage this plan. There were so many young men seeking their fortunes in America, she said; but M. le Comte confided that Jules would not be sent entirely empty-handed. "It is my aim to establish him as one of the editors of some successful journal, of which he should be part proprietor. He writes English remarkably; Madame should see his essays written at the *pension*, — they are absolutely *incroyable!*"

There was some one else who was looking through all this trouble and uncertainty to America as a possible haven of safety. Clemence said to Alice one morning, "Ah! Mademoiselle, when you return to your own country, I would be enchanted if you would take me with you."

"And the poor old mother, Clemence?"

"I will see her first, Mademoiselle, and when I have explained everything, she will be glad to let me go, especially as I mean to make a home for her over yonder."

"What will you do in America, poor child?"

"I have thought of that. I could be a hairdresser. You American ladies have such beautiful hair! The hairdresser who waited on Madame la Comtesse at the villa had once served in that capacity to the Empress, and she taught me everything she knew; she said that I had great dispositions. If Mademoiselle will allow me, I will do her hair this morning in six different styles, and she will have opportunity to judge of my talent. *En Pompadour*, with a touch of powder, Mademoiselle would be ravishing; or, if she would allow me to use the curling-tongs, I could dress her hair exactly in the style which was most becoming to the Empress. When she visited our villa I had the honor to assist one morning at her toilette. I even held the hairpins; and as I realized the magnitude

of the occasion, the way in which the curls were arranged is so exactly photographed upon my memory, that I shall never forget it. I would be so grateful if Mademoiselle would allow me to attempt a reproduction, a reminiscence of the imperial coiffure." She threw herself into a tragic attitude, regarded Alice seriously for a few moments, and then exclaimed, "But no, the Spanish style is more becoming to Mademoiselle; with a high comb and a bit of black lace she would be a dream."

ALICE WRITES TO MÈRE BABETTE.

Alice yielded, glad to please little Clemence, at the same time wondering how any one could be so light-hearted and trivial. But Clemence, with all her appearance of frivolity, was revolving matters of deep importance to herself. She gave the coiffure an affectionate pat, and proceeded in a hesitating manner: "Mademoiselle has been so good, has interested herself so much in my insignificant affairs, that I would be deeply grateful if Mademoiselle would do me one more great favor."

"Something about America, Clemence?"

"No, Mademoiselle; but if you will write a letter for me to my old mother at Ferrières, and send it by a pigeon, — ah! that would be heavenly kind."

"I will write it, Clemence, and hand it to Mr. Osborne. I think he will be willing to send it with his next packet; but you know he is saving his pigeons very jealously, for he has only a limited number, and we do not know how long the siege may last, or what exigencies may arise for communication with the outside world. Nevertheless, I think he will send it;" and Alice seated herself at her writing-table, making a charming picture, as she asked, "What do you want me to say to your mother, Clemence?"

"Tell her that I am sorry that I did not tell her at first where I was going, and that I hope she will forgive me for causing her so much anxiety. Tell her that I shall come to her as soon as I can get outside, and that I have been a good girl since I left her; and then, Mademoiselle will know best how to tell it — "

"Tell what, Clemence, — the American plan?"

"No, I would rather tell that myself; but tell her, please," — and here Clemence fidgeted and blushed till her cheeks would have matched Madame's patriotic cap-ribbons, — "that I am very happy, and shall have some good news to tell her when I come."

Alice looked at the girl in surprise. "You act, Clemence," she said, "like a girl with her first proposal."

Clemence laughed, and looked up shyly. "Mademoiselle is very clever," she said; "that is just what it is."

"Some soldier, I suppose."

Clemence nodded energetically

"Then what becomes of this fine plan of going to America?"

"Oh, I shall go, — I shall go all the same. He is going too."

"Dear me!" exclaimed Alice; "we shall soon have to charter a

steamer for our emigrants. Would n't it be better for your lover to go first, and make a home for you before you follow him ? "

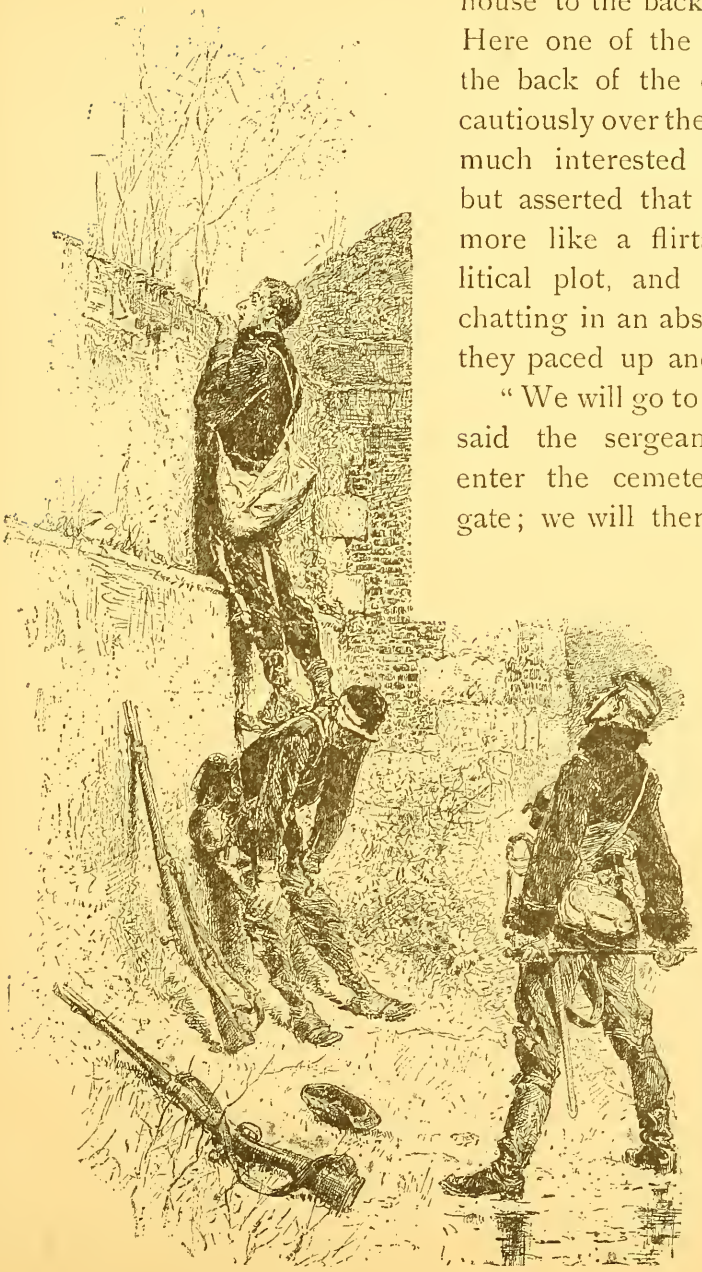
" Oh, no, Mademoiselle," Clemence replied, smoothing her apron with great importance. " I have more experience of the world than he, — more experience in making my own living, I mean."

" Then you must be a couple of babes in the woods," Alice thought to herself, not unkindly. She felt a strong affection for Clemence, and she hoped to win her confidence, and be able to help the friendless girl in what she felt must be a perilous position; but she did not volunteer any advice or patronage, or ask any indiscreet questions. She simply drew the girl to her, with an arm about her waist, and said kindly, " I am so glad for you, Clemence. A *good* man's love is one of the very best gifts which God can make us."

" And he is good ! " Clemence replied, rolling up her eyes in rapture.

Alice took the letter to Mr. Osborne, and he promised that it should be sent by the next pigeon. In spite of the light way in which he had treated the communications of Alphonse, Mr. Osborne was worried. It was a long time since he had received a despatch from Sallie, and he could not tell whether she received his. More than this, he had missed one or two of his Ferrière pigeons. In some unaccountable way they had disappeared. At first he thought it possible that Chiffon or Gourmet had entered the dove-cot by the way of the roofs; but he had lately come to the conclusion that they could only have been taken by some human thief. His razor had been returned, but he was sure that his letters had been tampered with, and little by little he began to regard Miss Miller with suspicion. The court of the Maison Duval communicated by a little postern gate with a small cemetery, which was surrounded by a high wall, and was also entered through a church. There was a tradition that the gate leading to it had been made for the convenience of the sexton, who had at one time lodged at Maison Duval. It was a lonely spot,

unused at present, and shaded by melancholy yews. James Osborne's only window commanded a view of its tombs and weedy walks; and although it was not a cheerful prospect, he frequently looked out upon it. One night he was surprised to see some one with a small lantern moving in the cemetery. The light twinkled out from an angle of the church, crossed the graveyard, was hidden for an instant, then the little postern gate opened, and a dark figure entered the court, extinguished the lantern, and disappeared inside the house. Was it the ghost of the old sexton? Madame Duval had said that the gate had not been used since his time. James Osborne was not superstitious, and when, shortly after, Miss Miller passed upstairs to the studio, it suddenly struck him that she must be the wanderer among the tombs. It was a singular fancy for a young lady, he thought, and one worth investigating. He noted the hour, and the next evening, a little in advance of it, he strolled carelessly by the church. Turning to retrace his steps, he saw a man wrapped in a large cloak disappear within the door. He followed, and saw the man open a side door and step into the cemetery. Mr. Osborne did not like to intrude further, and he returned as quickly as possible to his own room. It was a clear, moonlight night, and he could see two figures in the churchyard, — the man in the long cloak, and a woman. He waited; the man presently retired through the church, and the woman entered the court of the Maison Duval, as she had done the preceding evening. Mr. Osborne was certain now that Miss Miller was in communication with some unknown person who was presumably a spy. He talked over the affair with a friend, a sergeant of Mobiles, who lived in the next house, and who considered it grave enough to investigate; but the next evening there was no one there. Several days passed, and one afternoon while it was yet light Mr. Osborne saw that the postern gate was open. He hurried to his friend's rooms, who summoned a couple of soldiers and proceeded with James Osborne through the rear of his own



AN INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE.

house to the back of the cemetery. Here one of the men mounted on the back of the other and peered cautiously over the wall. He seemed much interested by what he saw, but asserted that it looked to him more like a flirtation than a political plot, and the couple were chatting in an absorbed manner as they paced up and down.

"We will go to the church door," said the sergeant, "and do you enter the cemetery by the little gate; we will then have an opportunity to seize the man, and you can take charge of the woman."

As the sergeant and his men approached the church, the man who had been seen inside the cemetery passed them; but no attempt was made to arrest him, for the sergeant recognized his friend, Jules de Beaumont, whose patriotism was too well

known to be for an instant doubted. The sergeant led his men back by a roundabout way, and waited for James Osborne, much chagrined at finding the alarm a false one. Mr. Osborne too, who had waited at the gate, and had seized the fair hand which soon opened it, was as surprised as its owner to find himself face to face, not with Miss Miller, but with little Clemence.

CHAPTER VIII.

THANKSGIVING DAY AT THE MAISON DUVAL.

THE pressure of the siege was felt more and more as the days went by. The meat ration issued to each person was cut down to one eighth of a pound for two days; but in the restaurants and at the Maison Duval meat was still served as usual. The Americans knew that what figured on the menu as beef was really horse; but they were quite willing to accept the cleanly graminivorous animal rather than fly to the unknown menagerie of the fancy dishes. A favorite dish of the Comte de Beaumont was rabbit (kitten) smothered in onions; but there was another delicacy which even the most hardened gastronome looked at askance. This was "salmi of game," — the game that frisked fat and impudent in the sewers of Paris. Even Miss Miller, who seemed very curious and eager to try the different famine dishes, and was not at all squeamish, — for a girl, — turned pale and pushed back her plate when informed that the "salmi" was minced rat.

Mrs. Davenport heard of many cases of real necessity, and spent much time and money in relieving them. Melicent would drive to very respectable quarters with a rough bag of potatoes under her feet in the dainty coupé, — a very acceptable gift from her mother to some compatriot of refined tastes; while a cabbage wrapped in tissue paper was as acceptable as a bouquet, and the old Englishman's re-

mark, "Of all the flowers of the garden give me the cauliflower," had never a truer showing.

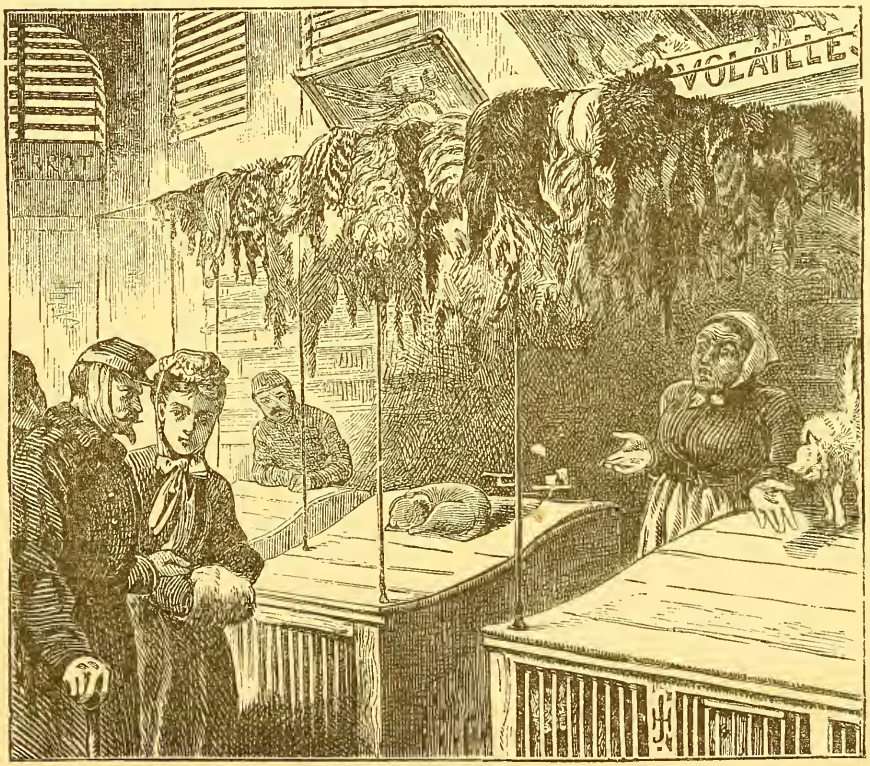
Minister Washburne did more in these days for the relief of foreigners of every nationality shut up in the city than the world will ever give him credit for.

It was Mrs. Davenport's desire to give a Thanksgiving dinner, as American in character as possible, to about twenty of her American friends. Madame would see that it was cooked, and served in a private apartment, but the girls were deputed to do the marketing. They started out in high spirits, Melicent suggesting that they should first visit a *boucherie canine et féline* (shop for cat and dog meat) just out of curiosity. One shuddering glance was enough, though the market-women protested that they were patronized by the aristocracy, and that cat had risen, a large one costing now twenty francs (four dollars). Dogs were cheaper; and Melicent was so much touched by the piteous aspect of a Russian Skye who was offered for sale alive, and seemed to understand for what fate he was reserved, that she incontinently purchased him. The market-woman tumbled him into the scales, remarking, "We weigh him hair and

AT THE MARKETS.

all; but if Mademoiselle will derange herself to wait one little moment we will kill, skin, and dress him for her, and have him ready for the oven, with herbs enough thrown in to make a *sauce piquante*."

A look of horror crossed Melicent's face. "Oh, did you think I could eat him?" she exclaimed; and catching up her rescued and



"DOGS WERE CHEAPER."

adopted pet she ran to the carriage as though fearing that the woman would insist upon decapitating him before her eyes. The woman did follow, waving her hand and calling, so that Alphonse was fain to stop.

"It is the fine herbs," she gasped, out of breath, "*pour la sauce, vous comprenez.*"

Melicent took the little green bouquet, as the easiest method of ridding herself of the woman. "I shall keep it," she said, "as a souvenir of the narrow escape you had from being roasted, my little fellow; and oh, Alice, what shall we call him?"

"The woman said that the herbs were for *la sauce;* why not call him Sauce? He looks as if he could be saucy enough if he were not so frightened."

"Well, that shall be his name; but, Alice, you do not seem very enthusiastic about his rescue."

"I am sorry for the poor doggy; but I was thinking, Melicent, of the human beings who are suffering in this great city at this time. Mr. Osborne says that he met a woman on the Pont-Neuf last night who had gone there to throw herself over because she was absolutely starving. If you could only give some child the food and care which that little animal will have, it seems to me that your affection and money would be better placed."

Melicent sat very quiet and thoughtful for a few moments. "Do you think I ought to take Sauce back to the butcher's?" she asked at last.

"I did not say so, dear."

"And you would n't do it, either. But I know what you mean; I have been asking myself lately why we remained in Paris during the siege if it was not to do more good than we are doing. Oh, I am not so selfish and careless as you think, and I 've made up my mind that with Mother's permission I will join the Red Cross and nurse the soldiers!"

"That is a rather startling determination, my dear; but if you do, I will too."

"But, Alice, you have your art. Every day of your stay in Paris is of value to you as an art student."

HOT-HOUSE, JARDIN DES PLANTES.

"If Henri Regnault could renounce art and march away as a common soldier at the call of his country, I fancy art will never miss me, and the key may rust in my studio door."

"If Sallie were only here to lead us! It is like going into battle without the trumpeter. Everything gives way before Sallie's will; and we have n't won Mamma over yet, and meantime —"

"And meantime we have n't purchased the Thanksgiving dinner."

"To be sure; and the first thing is the turkey."

Once more they visited the markets, but could find no bird which satisfied Melicent. Alphonse advised them to drive to the Jardin des Plantes. "All of the animals in the Menagerie are to be delivered over to the markets in a few days, and perhaps through the influence of M. le Comte de Beaumont you might engage some curiosity beforehand."

"IN FRONT OF THE CAGES."

Melicent was familiar with the conservatories at the Jardin des Plantes, for she had often walked in the Palm House and had studied its rare forms; but she had always felt a repugnance to the Menagerie, with its unpleasant odors and uncouth forms, such as most people would indulge only toward the Snake House. Alice, on the contrary, had sketched in front of the cages; she knew M. Barye, the lecturer on comparative anatomy here, and the sculptor of the magnificent groups of animals

in action, fighting and hunting lions, which are so well known through their reproduction as mantel bronzes.

She led the way now to the cage of a cross, mangy-looking old lion. "I believe this is the very brute," she said, "that Henri Regnault tried to draw when a little boy, and finding that the bars of the cage interfered with his view, he begged to be admitted, and finished his sketch inside."

"He looks tough," Melicent remarked. "I don't believe we will have him on the Thanksgiving menu."

Alice laughed. "Somebody told me," she continued, "an incident which occurred during a call upon Landseer, which would seem to imply that lion is a favorite London dish. The great animal-painter had ordered a lion, which had just died at the Zoölogical Gardens, to be sent to his studio to serve as a model for one of his magnificent studies. While the strangers were calling, the maid tapped at the studio door, and remarked all in one breath, 'If you please, Sir, the men have brought the lion on a cart, and Mrs. Landseer would like to know whether you will have a roast or boiled dinner.'"

The girls passed slowly down the aisle studying the faces of the animals. "What was the old Levitical law?" Melicent asked, meditatively.

"'Whatsoever parteth the hoof and cheweth the cud, that shall ye eat,'" replied Alice; "'and whatsoever goeth upon his paws, among all manner of beasts that go on all four, those are unclean unto you.'"

"Then bear-steaks would be out of the question; and yet I have heard that they are very nice. But, Alice dear, just look at that cage of monkeys; surely no one will ever eat them."

"And yet in South America they are a favorite dish. I have heard that they have nearly the same flavor as squirrel."

"Let us go into the Aviary; after all, what we want is a substitute for turkey."

As they left the house they met the Comte de Beaumont, who was

taking his constitutional in the Gardens. He had some office in connection with the management, and it was a favorite spot of his. He was looking very much depressed when the girls first caught sight of him; but he brightened up immediately, and began chatting with his accustomed gallantry. As he and Jules were the only Frenchmen invited to the Thanksgiving dinner, Melicent felt that she might tell him of her needs.

"I comprehend," he exclaimed; "it is your *fête nationale*, and the eagle is your national bird; it is your custom to consume an eagle at these patriotic entertainments."

M. DE BEAUMONT.

"Oh, no, Monsieur le Comte! not an eagle, — a turkey, a common barnyard turkey."

"Ees it posseeble? How one may misconceive! Ze turkey is zen your bird national? I had always thought it to be ze eagle."

"So it is, Monsieur; the eagle *is* our emblem, but we *eat* the turkey."

The Count shook his head in mild mystification; but suddenly he exclaimed, "Imbecile that I am! we have, by good fortune, in the next house an American turkey of quite a different species from our own, which is precisely your affair, — one of the celebrated turkeys of South Carolina."

"I did not know," Melicent remarked, "that they had better turkeys in South Carolina than in any of the other States."

"Perhaps it is a wild turkey," Alice suggested. But both girls stood amazed before the vulture-like creature which was presently shown them. Strange to say, Melicent recovered herself first. "That," she exclaimed, "is a turkey buzzard; they are permitted to exist in the South as scavengers, but we never eat them."

Monsieur le Comte expressed himself as "desolated" at having so signally failed in pleasing the young ladies. "Does Mademoiselle see anything else which she would like?" he asked.

"How would a roast peacock answer, after the Roman fashion?" Alice asked. "We have certainly a wide enough choice. Here are all the banned birds of that same old Levitical category, — 'The eagle, and the ossifrage, and the osprey, and the vulture, and the kite, after his kind, every raven after his kind, and the owl, and the night-hawk, and the cuckoo, and the hawk after his kind, and the little owl, and the cormorant, and the great owl, and the swan, and the pelican, and the gier-eagle, and the stork, the heron, and the lapwing, and the bat — '"

"That will do, Alice," Melicent interrupted gently. "Monsieur le Comte, I think if you can obtain it for us, we would like a swan. I am sure that graceful, snowy bird could offend the prejudices of no stomach however squeamish."

The polite gentleman expressed himself delighted to be allowed to serve Melicent. "I will move heaven and earth to obtain it," he exclaimed; "if necessary, I will even," — rolling his eyes impressively, — "I will even petition the Government."

"Almost enough to make one turn vegetarian!" said Melicent, as they drove away. "When one considers all the disgusting creatures which one could not be induced to eat, and such dear ones as this lovely Sauce, who is altogether too human for such cannibalism, there is very little left upon which to indulge our carnivorous appetites."

They drove next to a small depot of American canned goods, and were able to obtain a jar of cranberry sauce and several cans of Boston baked beans. They could find no pumpkin nor any substitute for it with which to make pies, but they secured a few apples; and Alice promised that if Madame Duval would let her use the kitchen, she would turn out a genuine Yankee mince-pie. With this meagre provisioning they returned to the Maison Duval. M. le Comte sat in the restaurant, a glass of *eau sucré* untouched on the little table

at his side, while he meditatively sucked the handle of his cane. He rose as the girls passed, and bowed profoundly.

"I hope he will not put himself to too much trouble about that swan," Melicent remarked, as she entered her own room; "a Frenchman is so profuse in his offers that one never knows when he is in earnest, but I really think I can trust M. de Beaumont."

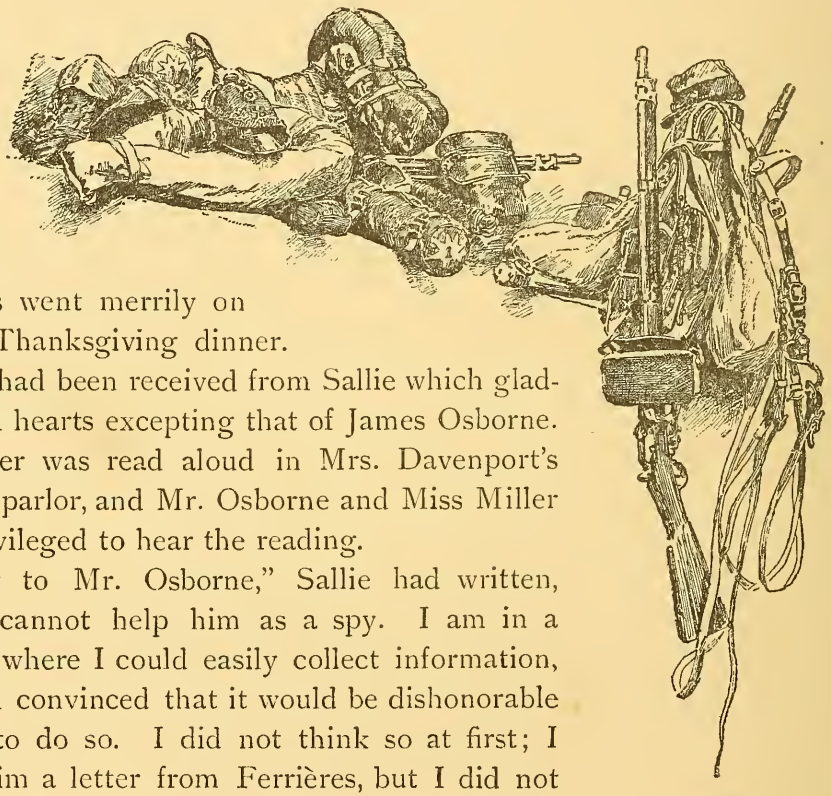
It so happened that Mrs. Davenport heard only the concluding part of the sentence, and gave an entirely false meaning to it. Jules de Beaumont had proposed to Melicent! — that was not so astonishing; but Melicent was kindly disposed to Jules de Beaumont, — that was indeed a shock. She would rather, too, that Melicent had confided in her before discussing the matter even with so intimate a friend as Alice. On the whole, she was much disturbed, but betrayed nothing of her agitation. She walked quietly to her dressing-table and carefully arranged her pointe duchesse cap with the little pink bows on her pretty silver-gray curls, and listened to the merry report of the marketing experiences. She even approved of the adoption of Sauce, and the little dog licked the lady's slender fingers with evident gratitude; it was a peculiarity of this little fellow that he always understood when people were talking about him, and often what was said. Owing to Mrs. Davenport's confusion of mind, she understood that it was Jules de Beaumont whom they had met at the Jardin des Plantes; and she was asking herself in a dazed way where Alice could have been when the proposal was made, when Melicent, gliding from the subject of the dog to that of offering herself as a hospital nurse, which his adoption had suggested, knelt by her mother's chair, and winding her arms about her, said, —

"I have something very important to ask of you, Mamma, — something which I am afraid you will not approve, and you may be sure I will not take the step without your consent; but indeed my heart is quite set upon it."

Certain that her daughter was speaking of her future marriage with

Jules de Beaumont, Mrs. Davenport was quite overcome. The tears came to her gentle eyes. "My dear child," she exclaimed, "I can guess what you mean; say no more. No, I do not approve. I do not like the French character, and I do not like soldiers. I beg that you will take time to consider this decision, for, after all, you must yourself decide."

Melicent kissed away her mother's tears, and the misapprehension was not explained until long after.



ACCOUTREMENTS.

Meantime preparations went merrily on for the Thanksgiving dinner. A letter had been received from Sallie which gladdened all hearts excepting that of James Osborne. The letter was read aloud in Mrs. Davenport's pleasant parlor, and Mr. Osborne and Miss Miller were privileged to hear the reading.

"Say to Mr. Osborne," Sallie had written, "that I cannot help him as a spy. I am in a position where I could easily collect information, but I am convinced that it would be dishonorable for me to do so. I did not think so at first; I wrote him a letter from Ferrières, but I did not send it."

Captain Müller considered. Yes, that was true. He had found the letter in the ulster pocket; it had not been sent. Perhaps, after all, she sympathized with the German cause. Mrs. Davenport read on:

"'I have had opportunity also to furnish information to the Prus-

sians; but I need not say that I have equally scorned being an informer in that direction. If I were a man I would fight for the French; but being a woman, I will not tattle for any one."

So Sallie was French in feeling. Strange to say, this did not lower her in Captain Müller's esteem. Evidently she had destroyed the despatches which he had intrusted to her care. No matter; he loved her all the same. Yes, the fact had dawned at length on his slow-moving Teutonic mind, — he really loved this exasperating American girl, and his heart was beating to the tune of —

"Wenn i' komm', wenn i' komm', wenn i' wiedrum komm'."

He hardly heard James Osborne say, "Some one has been sending Sallie information for the German headquarters; who can it be?"

The young man looked keenly at Miss Miller, who looked up from the crochet-work which Melicent was teaching her with such an evidently uncomprehending look in her frank blue eyes, that even James Osborne could not believe her guilty; and yet he mistrusted the girl, and hated to see Melicent so kind to her. It filled him with an unreasoning jealousy, of which he was ashamed in his better moments, for he knew that he had received no right to be jealous of Melicent.

Thanksgiving Day, the 26th of November, came at last; but any one not so absorbed as our Americans were in preparation for their dinner would have felt a certain tremor in the air, a suppressed excitement, a tension of nerves, which told that something of importance was going on. Jules de Beaumont presented himself on the 25th, followed by a porter bearing the swan, — a noble bird, — but he made only a very brief call, and seemed distrait, answering at random all their questions, and hurrying away to polish his cuirass until it outshone his mirror. There was a great furbishing and polishing of accoutrements going on all over the city. The gunsmith's wife was sure, from the amount of emery-paper and scouring pomade which they had sold, that there was to be a grand review somewhere. Miss Miller, more keen to observe the signs of the times, was certain that a

sortie was planned. If she could only find out in what direction, she would quietly return with this news to the German army, for life under James Osborne's scrutiny was becoming uncomfortable. A regiment of horse had left the city early in the week, and returned again the next day, — that was a reconnoissance. But where had they been, and what had they decided upon? All was provokingly mysterious. The family attended service in the American chapel on the

HUSSARS RECONNOITRING.

morning of Thanksgiving Day. There were many Americans left in Paris, and it was an encouraging and beautiful thing thus to honor their country and their country's God together. Melicent noticed several compatriots who were connected with the American Ambulance, as their hospital was called. One of them, a resolute young surgeon, spoke to her as they left the church, and invited her to visit the new hospital tents *before* they were filled by the wounded from the next battle.

"I would rather come after they are full," Melicent replied earnestly.

"They will not look so pretty then," said the surgeon; "but if you

really mean work you will be very welcome. We shall have enough of it soon."

The first guest to arrive that afternoon was the Comte de Beaumont, in almost total eclipse behind an enormous bouquet which he presented to Mrs. Davenport. It was too heavy for her to hold, and the girls tripped away to arrange it as the centre-piece for the table, supported by Mrs. Davenport's pair of branching silver candelabra; with the wax-lights gleaming under pretty colored shades, the table had a very festive effect. Alice had decorated a dinner-card for each guest; and the girls remained so long giving dainty touches to the table, that the Comte de Beaumont found the opportunity, which he had so long desired, of speaking to Mrs. Davenport in regard to the marriage of their children. He made the proposal in due French form, regretting that his wife was not by his side to ratify it, but assuring Mrs. Davenport that his latest advices from her were of such a nature as to authorize him in the step he was taking.

Mrs. Davenport thanked the Count for the great honor done her daughter, but added, —

"In America we give our children great liberty of choice in these matters, attempting only to counsel them wisely. Are you quite certain that Monsieur Jules really loves my daughter? He certainly has not the appearance of a very ardent lover."

The Count frowned slightly. "It is true, Madame, it is not Jules' nature to be impassioned, enthusiastic. At one time I feared that he would never marry; but he has changed. He confided to me recently that he loved and was beloved, and he asked my permission to marry and go to America as soon as the unhappy condition of our country would permit him to retire from it. 'She whom I have chosen,' he said, 'has no rank; but what of that? My own is nothing since the fall of the Empire;' and he begged me to intercede with his mother in his behalf. So, my dear Madame, I can give you, I am sure, convincing proof that our Jules is a genuine lover."

"Then," replied Mrs. Davenport, faintly, "it rests entirely with Melicent."

Other guests were announced, among them the surgeon with whom Melicent had spoken that morning. She begged him to tell her mother about the new hospital tents, and Miss Miller hovered near, asking how soon they expected to use them. The parlors filled, and the chatting increased to chattering. M. le Comte walked about, beaming on everybody, radiantly happy, and expressing his delight at meeting so many Americans, and his opinion that America was, next to France, the greatest country on the face of the earth. He caught a glimpse of Clemence in her new cap trimmed with cherry ribbons, and for the first time recognized her as having been at one time a member of his own household.

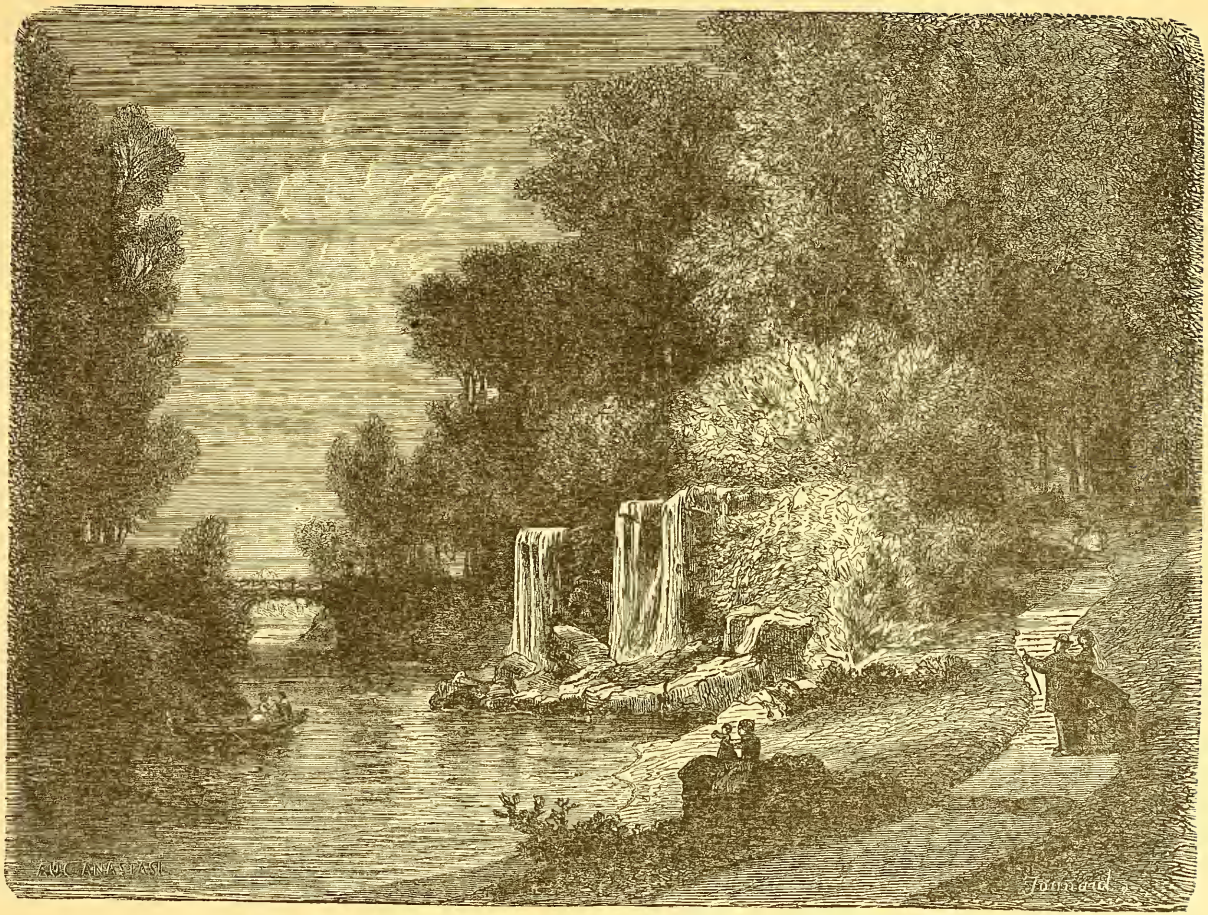
"And so you are maid to Mademoiselle Melicent," he exclaimed, taking her hand. "Ah, well! be a good girl, and we may yet have you back again in the De Beaumont family."

Clemence looked up with a quick blush. "Was it possible that M. le Comte had given his consent?" But no; he slipped a franc into her hand, and darted away to speak to his son, who had just entered.

It was time to serve dinner, but the war correspondent had not arrived; and as it had been arranged that he should take Melicent out, they waited for him.

"He told me he was going to call on General Trochu to obtain items for his newspaper letters," said Mrs. Davenport to Miss Miller, "but would certainly be here in time. Something very important must have detained him, and I will ask Jules de Beaumont to take his place."

The dinner was a great success. The surgeon carved the swan, which was a triumph of culinary art, decorated with red and white roses carved in beet and turnip. The cranberry sauce and the baked beans were eaten with national enthusiasm. The French entrées



CASCADE IN THE BOIS DE VINCENNES.

duly appreciated, the ices were sipped, bonbons nibbled, and Alice's mince-pie received a standing toast. Then, after the nuts and raisins, coffee was served in Mrs. Davenport's Dresden cups, and the party gathered in the parlors for music. The Count gave Jules a meaning look, repeating the words, "Now is your time," and the young man turned pale. He had eaten nothing, and had been very silent at table, for in that brief whispered conference with his son as he entered the Count had told him that Mrs. Davenport had consented to the marriage, and that Melicent was now his affianced; the insignificant detail of presenting the ring alone remaining. Jules comprehended that a terrible mistake had been made. Why had he not been brave enough to tell his father that Clemence was the lady of his heart? There was no time for such an explanation now, or rather it must be made to Melicent instead of to his father. Feeling that he would rather have faced a mitrailleuse, he walked desperately up to Melicent, and asked for a few moments' conversation with her in the conservatory.

"I have received an order to report at the Bois de Vincennes to-night. There will be fighting, and I may not return. I have something very important to tell you."

Miss Miller overheard this request. "Vincennes," the spy repeated to himself; "the sortie is in the direction of Vincennes; but I must hear more," and Captain Müller hastened in advance of the young couple to the conservatory. It was hardly more than a bay-window opening both into the parlor and the dining-room, and it was behind the dining-room door that the spy ensconced himself.

Melicent's previous experience had taught her to recognize the symptoms of an approaching proposal, and she was not to blame for imagining that she perceived them here. Genuinely sorry, for she liked Jules in a friendly way, and was not enough of a coquette to delight in giving pain, she racked her brain for some way out of the dilemma, and a sudden happy thought struck her. She

would take the initiative, and by confiding in Jules save him from the mortification of a refusal. It was the easier to do this, as the young man was in no hurry to begin his confession.

"I am glad to have this opportunity, M. de Beaumont," she said kindly, as they seated themselves among the flower-pots, "for I have always regarded you as a very kind friend, and I want to tell you of a decision which I have recently formed." Jules listened politely, glad to put off the evil day of his own speaking. "I have determined to devote my life to philanthropy. I am going to be a hospital nurse."

"Mademoiselle is an angel of mercy to our poor French soldiers," murmured Jules.

"But it is not all for France," Melicent persisted. "I said I had determined to give my life to it, and I hope to have a very long life, and that France will soon be at peace, and all the French soldiers beyond the need of nursing. I know that I shall like the work; I feel an enthusiasm for it which I never felt for anything else in my life. I am going into it heart and soul, with no room for any other enthusiasm. I shall never marry; but when my work is done here, I shall find something of the same kind to do somewhere else."

The young man's entire attitude changed. He lifted himself from his drooping posture, and looked Melicent eagerly in the face.

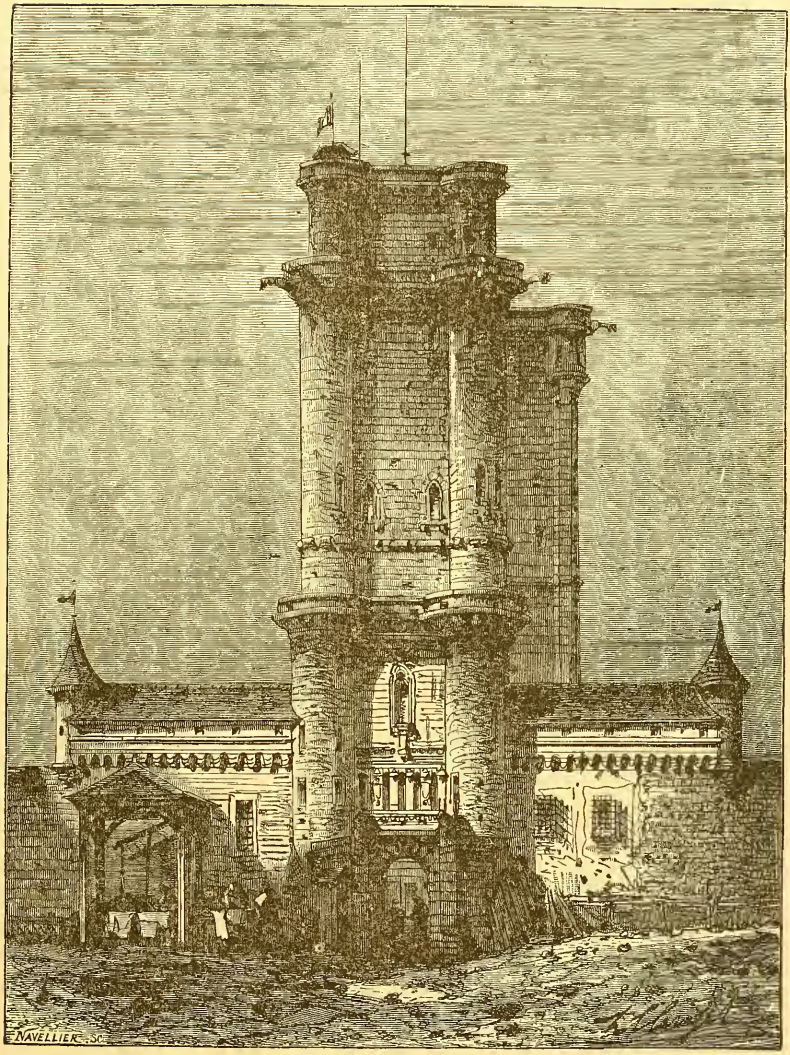
"Mademoiselle has said that she will never marry; but that is absurd, — impossible!"

"It is a resolution which I have firmly determined upon," Melicent replied, with the absolutism of nineteen.

"Mademoiselle will think differently some day," said Jules. "Some happy man will be able to waken that regard which — "

"Now, please do not talk nonsense," Melicent interrupted; "at any rate, I am now perfectly certain that such a thing can never be."

Melicent was greatly astonished to see a look of unutterable relief sweep over Jules de Beaumont's face; it was unmistakable.



THE DONJON OF VINCENNES.

"Mademoiselle, then, refuses absolutely the proposition which my father has had the presumption to make in my favor."

"I knew of no such proposal," Melicent replied; "and from your expression I cannot imagine that it was your desire."

"It was a dream of our parents," replied Jules, "and I cannot express to you, my friend, the gratitude which I feel to you for releasing me from a false position. You call this *le Jour de Reconnaissance.* You have made it such indeed to two unfortunate lovers." Jules went on to explain his affection for Clemence, and the opposition of his family, and ended by begging Melicent to take his part with his father. This the astonished girl readily agreed to do. It was not a little shock to find her rejected lover so easily consoled; but she was almost as much relieved as he, by the unexpected dénouement.

EN AVANT.

"And now," exclaimed the happy young man, looking at his watch, "I have just fifteen minutes in which to bid Clemence farewell, for General Ducrot has ordered us to rendezvous at Vincennes at nine o'clock. Do you hear that distant trumpet-call? That is for the Mobiles. My horse will be saddled and at my door in twenty minutes. Wish me success, Mademoiselle, for we may next meet under the Red Cross."

He had hardly gone to the accustomed trysting-place in the little churchyard, the Count squeezing his hand, and saying in a trembling voice, as he left the room, "*Fais ton devoir advienne que pourra*," when James Osborne entered and asked for Melicent. She was still sitting in the conservatory trying to collect her scattered senses, and to determine how best to break the ice with the Count, when the war correspondent found her.

"I have some rather startling news, Miss Davenport," he began, hurriedly.

"Yes?" Melicent replied, in a hesitating manner, putting her hand to her head, and wondering what was coming next.

"I come to you with it because I think you have the clearest head of any of us, and will be best able to grasp the situation and suggest an expedient."

"Oh, please don't depend upon me! I feel like a baby; my judgment is worth nothing!" the girl replied impulsively.

Mr. Osborne looked surprised and disappointed. "As you like," he said; "perhaps I had better take it to your mother."

Melicent collected herself with a strong effort. "No, don't annoy Mamma, if it is anything that I can do; at least, let me know it first. Is it trouble? Have you heard again from Sallie?"

"It does not relate to Miss Benton, and the trouble is only this: The Miss Miller who has been staying with us for a month past is a Prussian spy."

Melicent uttered an exclamation of surprise, or both would have heard the involuntary movement made by the listener behind the dining-room door.

"She seems such a nice girl," Melicent said persuasively; "I am sure you are mistaken."

"She is not a girl at all. Alphonse and I have watched narrowly, and have now proof positive. Our guest is an officer in the German army."

"But need we give him up?" Melicent plead earnestly. "Can we not insist on his leaving the city?"

"That is no longer possible; the gates are closed to all but the military, and it is impossible for us to harbor him longer, if we would; the authorities are on his track. What was that noise? Was any one in the dining-room?"

"Clemence may have been putting the china in place."

James Osborne threw open the door, but the room was empty. "Where is Miss Miller?" he asked.

"She was at dinner, and promised to play something from Wagner afterward. You must let me warn her, Mr. Osborne; I cannot leave a human being in such deadly peril without doing my utmost in her behalf."

They passed through the rooms together, but Miss Miller was not to be found. They hurried up to the studio, but it was unoccupied. Some papers recently ignited were smouldering in the fireplace. James Osborne poured water upon them, but it was too late, — they were illegible. "Who could have warned him?" he asked; for it was evident that the spy had fled.

CHAPTER IX.

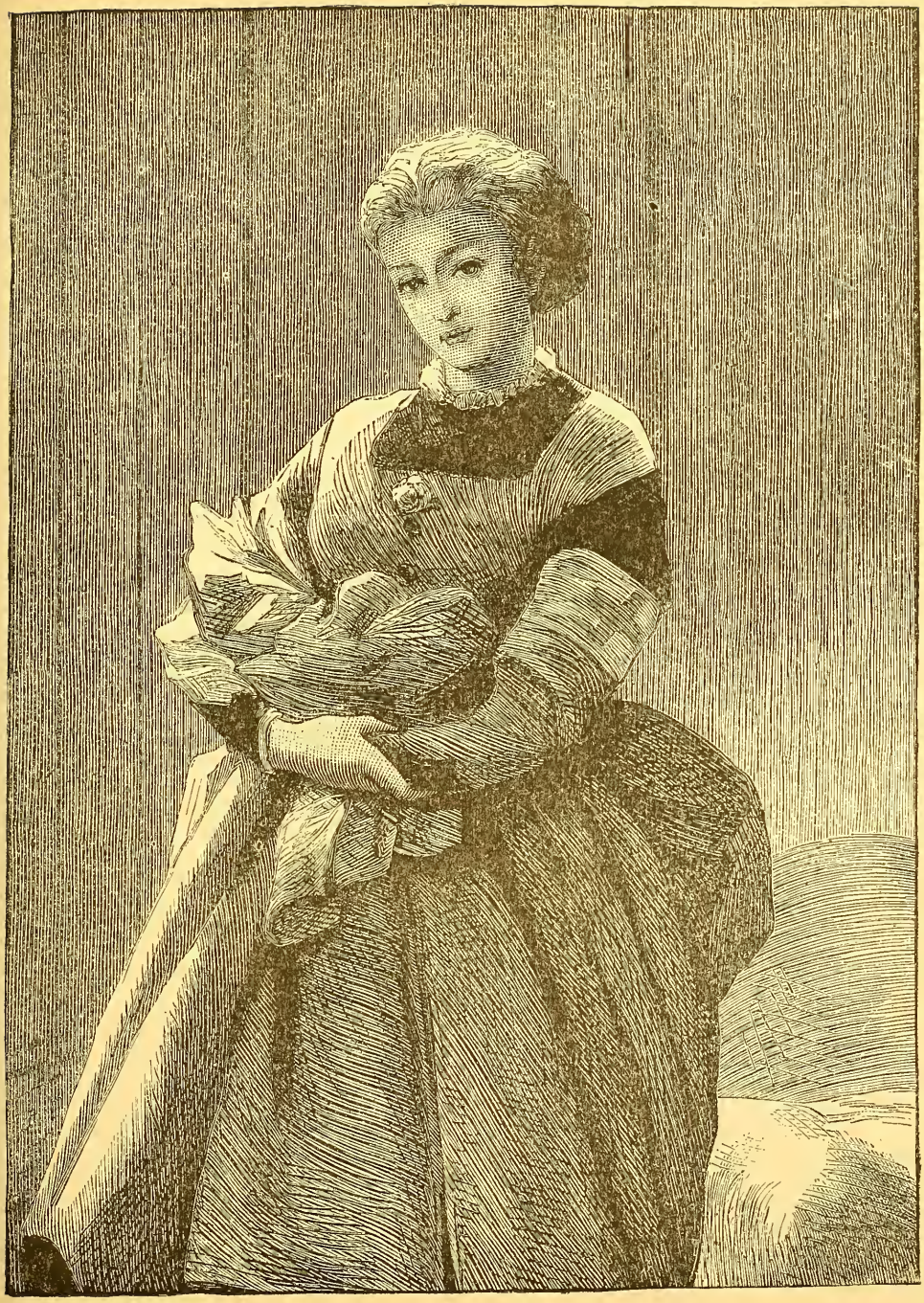
THE RED CROSS AND THE SORTIE.

WHEN Melicent returned to the drawing-room she found that the conversation had fallen on the organization of the Red Cross.

"I know that it takes its name from its flag and arm badge," Alice was saying, — "a red cross on a white ground; just the reverse of the national flag of Switzerland, which displays a white cross on a red field. But I would like to know more about the Association."

"The Red Cross Society was formed several years since," replied the American surgeon. "It was composed of members of different nationalities, and without any foreknowledge of this particular war. It arranged by an international treaty, signed by nearly all civilized nations except the United States, 'for the exemption from capture and protection of those taking care of the wounded on battlefields, and also of such inhabitants of invaded territories as gave them shelter and assistance. It undertook to care for wounded men when they fell, no matter to which of the belligerent armies they belonged,' and its plans were so fully matured that it was able to take the field on the declaration of the present hostilities."

"You say," said Mrs. Davenport, "that America took no part in this treaty; but Clara Barton, who is doing such a noble work in Strasburg, is a Massachusetts woman."



THE RED CROSS.

"Many individual Americans are members of the League," replied the surgeon. "It is strange, but there is no people quicker to respond to the call of humanity than the American, take them as individuals, and no civilized government harder to move in the same direction than our own."

They continued to speak of Clara Barton, of her noble work for our own soldiers during the War of the Rebellion, and James Osborne remarked that he had heard that the Grand Duchess Louise of Baden, the only daughter of the Emperor, was deeply interested in the Red Cross Society, and had invited Miss Barton to visit her at Carlsruhe until the close of the siege of Strasburg, in order to be instructed in Miss Barton's ideas of managing a Sanitary Commission.

Miss Barton afterward wrote of the duchess:[1] —

"Her many and beautiful castles were transformed into hospitals, and her entire court formed a committee of relief. I have seen a wounded Arab from the French armies stretch out his arms to her in blessing as she passed his bed."

The Empress and Emperor conferred on Miss Barton the Iron Cross, which is only bestowed upon those who have earned it by heroism on the battlefield. At the capitulation of Strasburg, Miss Barton entered the city and carried on the work of relief here and in the other cities which suffered from siege. She did not reach Paris until the closing days of the Commune, when she labored most efficiently, distributing German and American bounty to the suffering.

The contrast of the perfect organization and abundant supplies furnished by this Society, with the terrible lack of help in our own war, was very forcibly impressed upon Miss Barton's mind. She writes: —

"I thought of the Peninsula in McClellan's campaign, of Petersburg Landing, Cedar Mountain, and second Bull Run, Antietam, old Fredericksburg with its acres of snow-covered and gun-covered glacis, and its fourth day flag of

[1] Compiled from "Our Famous Women." See Chapter on Clara Barton, by Lucy Larcom.

truce, of its dead and starving wounded frozen to the ground, and our commissions and their supplies in Washington, with no effective organization, or power to go beyond; of the Petersburg mine, with its four thousand dead and wounded, and no flag of truce, the wounded broiling in a July sun, the dead bodies putrefying where they fell. As I saw the work of these Red Cross societies in the field, accomplishing in four months under their systematic organization what we failed to accomplish in four years without it, — no mistakes, no needless suffering, no waste, no confusion, but order, plenty, cleanliness, and comfort wherever that little flag made its way, — I said to myself, I will try to make my people understand the Red Cross and that treaty."

The surgeon ended his remarks with, "We need fifty Clara Bartons right here and now. Our ambulances are ordered out for to-morrow, and will probably return well filled."

THE AMERICAN SURGEON.

"I have had some experience in nursing, Doctor," said Mrs. Davenport, quietly, "and if the girls will try to get along without me, I will report to you to-morrow."

"But the girls will come too," Melicent exclaimed, with kindling eyes; "that is just what Alice and I have wanted to ask you, but have not dared."

Mrs. Davenport looked from one to the other in mild surprise.

"It is no holiday amusement," said the surgeon. "I fear you are none of you strong enough for the work."

"You have no idea how strong I am," Melicent replied. "I stood a season at Newport after one at Saratoga, and used to go swimming every morning, and riding in the afternoon, after dancing half the night; and I made up three conditioned studies, too, with a private tutor, so that I could graduate with my class at Vassar."

"I cannot boast of any such feats as that," said Alice, smiling; "but I have never had a sick day since I recovered from the measles ten years ago, and I am accustomed to paint standing seven hours daily. I think we can stand it."

"We will engage, then, as night nurses," said Mrs. Davenport, "since it is possible for us to make up our sleep at home during the day, and will come on duty to-morrow evening. Please give us the same ward, that I may be able to assist these young apprentices with suggestions."

Other of the guests present followed Mrs. Davenport's example, and volunteered their services, and the surgeon left with a smiling face. One by one the other guests departed, the Comte de Beaumont remaining till the last. Alice felt that a family council was about to take place, and discreetly stole away.

The Count was complimenting Mrs. Davenport on the admirable spirit manifested by her daughter, as Melicent brought him his tiny glass of anisette. He rose and gallantly drank her health in it; then, setting down the glass, he took her hand, and looked vainly at her shapely fingers for a ring.

"Chère Mademoiselle," he asked, "is it not all settled? Are not the De Beaumonts to congratulate themselves?"

"Dear M. de Beaumont," Melicent replied, "I can never express my gratitude to you for thinking that you would like to have me for a daughter; but really you are quite mistaken. You do not understand just what an American girl is, and it is much better that Jules should have a French wife. Besides, you see, Jules and I do not love each other."

"Melicent, my dear child," Mrs. Davenport said, drawing her daughter to her, "is this resolution to become a hospital nurse *all* you had to say to me when you told me the other day of something very important which you had to confide?"

"Yes, Mamma, all that I had to tell you then, though it is but

fair to say that Jules and I have had a little conversation this evening which I wish to report."

"I do not understand," exclaimed the Count, much confused. "Have you rejected my son? Have you had the heart to make him miserable for life?"

MELICENT RISES TO THE OCCASION.

"He is not miserable, my dear friend, but, on the contrary, very happy; for he loves a sweet, good girl who loves him very truly in return, and he has asked me to break this to you."

"The scoundrel! and did he tell you this instead of proposing to you?"

"No, Monsieur, he did his best to carry out your wishes; but he

looked so very grateful when I assured him that such a marriage was impossible, that I immediately guessed the truth."

"So," said the old gentleman, musingly, "my rascal of a son loves some Frenchwoman, and will complicate the family position still more by allying himself with some new political party, instead of breaking away from it all, as his mother and I had planned, and becoming an American."

"But, M. de Beaumont, that may still be. The young girl who has won your son's affection is not connected with French politics in any way. She is a dear friend of mine, and is going to America with me, where she will become an American to all intents and purposes. Jules can follow her, marry her from our house, and settle wherever he likes in our great country. Will not that be enough like the plan you had made for him?"

"Perhaps so, perhaps so," the old gentleman replied doubtfully; "but who is this young girl, whom I am to receive in your stead?"

"You know her, M. de Beaumont, or at least you think you do, but you do not begin to know her strength of character, — how she hid herself from Jules for fear that her love for him would break down her resolution never to consent to anything but a marriage with a cordial welcome from his parents.

An angry light glared from the old man's eyes. "And you propose for the De Beaumonts an alliance with peasants, with *canaille?*"

"Monsieur forgets that I have said that Clemence is my friend; and we have no peasant class in America."

The shock was too great; with all Melicent's tact, M. de Beaumont was deeply incensed, and he descended the staircase, puffing and snorting like a wounded buffalo. Melicent did not smile as she might have done at another time. She was very weary, and she simply put her arms around her mother's neck and laid her head upon her shoulder.

Mrs. Davenport gently stroked her child's hair. "I am very glad," she said, "that you and Jules do not care for each other."

"But I do care very much for Jules, Mamma, only it is a motherly sort of care. I would not have taken all this trouble for him if he had not seemed to me like an amiable, pathetic, helpless infant; they are both babies, — father and son. Oh, Mother, if I ever marry, it must be some one with moral courage and backbone enough to fight his own battles. I had thought that Jules was gaining this lately; but when it came to the crucial test of presenting Clemence to his father, he showed himself a coward. I shall half distrust him all his life, now. Would he have accepted the situation if I had not helped him out? Suppose for an instant that I had cared for him! I do believe he would have been false to Clemence; and yet there is no question that he loves her. Who is it said, —

'You love! That 's high as you shall go;
For 't is as true as gospel text,
Not noble then is never so,
Either in this world or the next'?"

"There, darling, you are excited; but I am very glad that my child has learned that amiability, engaging manners, refinement, and fastidious tastes are not the corner-stones of character."

It was late when mother and daughter slept. All night the cannon rumbled through the streets, and there was the steady tramp, tramp, of *le regiment qui passe*, with now and then a good voice singing, —

"Vive la guerre, Piff-paff."

To the southeast of Paris the Marne makes a loop before it joins the Seine. Just north of this spot lies the Bois de Vincennes and the village of Champigny. One hundred thousand Frenchmen and four hundred cannon were collected in the wood of Vincennes under General Ducrot, whose object was to throw bridges over the Marne and force his way out to make a juncture with the troops at Orleans.

"JEAN ROUSSEL WAS STATIONED AS A SCOUT."

At the same time General Vinoy was to make a noisy demonstration toward the south in the direction of L'Hay and Choisy le Roi, while the forts and redoubts on the south were to keep up a cannonading toward Meudon, in the hope of attracting the Prussians in this direction, and blinding them to the sortie at Vincennes. Troops were also ostentatiously marched and countermarched about St. Denis, to draw the Germans on the east to the north of Paris. (See map on cover-linings.) It was an ingeniously-contrived plan, and an electric current ran through the army from General Trochu down to the simplest Franctireur, telling that a supreme effort was to be made for France.

Jean Roussel was stationed as a scout on the extreme edge of the Bois, and the old sergeant who gave him the *mot d'ordre* had given him strict injunctions to let no one pass in either direction without it. This was a dangerous post, and Jean knew it, but he did not care, for he had seen Clemence, and he knew that there was no hope for him. It was he who had been selected to climb on his comrades' shoulders and look into the churchyard, and he had recognized both Clemence and Jules de Beaumont in that brief glance. It was an even choice to him now whether the Prussians killed him or not.

While he kept guard, Clemence was bidding a tender farewell to Jules, who was not quite so weak as Melicent had fancied, but would have managed in some lame and blundering but honest fashion to explain his predicament to her, even if her quick woman's wit had not extricated him from his dilemma.

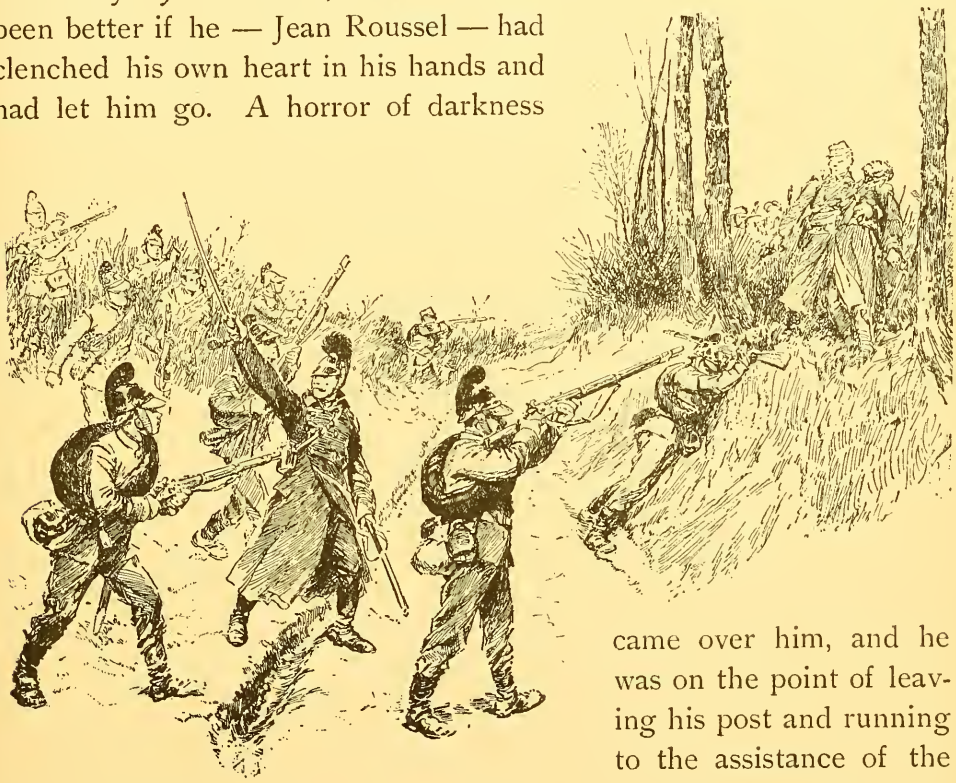
While Jules was wasting the precious moments in the churchyard, Captain Müller was taking advantage of his dalliance. Warned none too quickly of the peril of his situation, he comprehended both his danger and his means of escape in the sentence, "The gates are closed to all but the military." Jules de Beaumont's horse would be waiting for him in a few moments, and on the instant Captain Müller resolved on his course of conduct. He flew to the studio, burned all

compromising papers, then hastened to Jules' room in a neighboring house, and exchanged the feminine garb, which he had worn so long, for the cuirassier uniform. His blond hair had an incongruous look, and he quickly plastered it and his eyebrows with patent blacking. Then, when the helmet with the long horse-tail was properly adjusted, he was startled by the resemblance to young De Beaumont which the cheval-glass showed him. He packed the feminine garments in a neat parcel which he addressed to Melicent; then, descending the stairs, he took the horse's reins from the stable-boy, who never once suspected his identity, and galloped swiftly away toward Vincennes. He passed every sentinel without challenge, until he reached the end of the Bois; but here he made a détour, for he had no desire to report at the general rendezvous, his object being to cross the Marne and to join a detachment of Saxons which he knew were stationed on the other side. The moonlight shone through the trees, and showed him a stupid-looking Mobile stationed near the bridge, the last of the French sentinels. The man ordered him to halt, but he flew by. It was Jean Roussel, and he brought his piece up in pursuance of the order which the old sergeant had given him; but as he did so, he thought he recognized the man who had just passed him, and he shouted: "Is it you, Monsieur Jules de Beaumont?"

Captain Müller had gained the bridge, but thinking that an affirmative answer would insure his safety, he half turned in his saddle and cried, "*Oui, mon enfant!*" Instantly Jean Roussel fired. It was his long-desired opportunity to kill his rival, and what an unhoped-for chance to do it in the performance of his own duty! Captain Müller reeled and fell forward on the neck of his horse, grasping its mane. The animal trotted on for some distance beyond the bridge before he fell, and then stood quietly beside him. Jean Roussel remained at his post. It would have been disobeying orders to cross the bridge; besides, there were sharp-shooters beyond the turn in the road. As he kept guard, he watched the form of the man lying over there.

The horse wandered about uneasily, neighed softly, and snuffed about the body, but the man did not lift a hand.

For an hour or more Jean Roussel watched his victim, and as he became convinced that he was dead, the rage died out of his heart, and he crossed himself in superstitious dread. Was he then a murderer? If only he had been sure that Jules de Beaumont had meant honorably by Clemence, it would have been better if he — Jean Roussel — had clenched his own heart in his hands and had let him go. A horror of darkness came over him, and he was on the point of leaving his post and running to the assistance of the man whom he had shot, when the horse suddenly threw up its head, snuffed the air, and galloped swiftly back toward the French troops; at the same instant Jean saw the dark forms of Saxon sharp-shooters stealing cautiously down the road. He discharged his piece again, and this time the report was heard by his



THE ATTACK ON THE OUTPOST.

friends, who hurried to the spot. At the same instant a dash was made in his direction by the Saxons, and so sharp a skirmish took place that the Mobiles were forced to fall back. Jean Roussel reported at headquarters that he had killed Jules de Beaumont while deserting to the enemy. The absence of Jules at roll-call and the return of his horse apparently corroborated this statement.

Meantime Jules, who had inevitably remained longer in the churchyard, bidding adieu to Clemence, than he had intended, hurried to his room only to find his uniform gone, his horse missing, and a mysterious bundle on his table addressed to Miss Davenport. His first thought was that some comrade who imagined him devoted to Melicent had played him a rascally trick, and that this package might contain his uniform. He opened it only to be still more mystified, and hurried back to the Maison Duval with it, hoping to find an explanation of this strange affair. He met his father in the most evil hour possible. The old gentleman was just leaving the door after his interview with Melicent, and he refused to believe his son's statement.

"You are a coward, sir," he exclaimed in fury, "and have taken this means to shirk your duty! You have doubtless pawned your uniform, and sold your horse at the shambles; but you shall not escape in this way! I will drag you to your officers, and they shall drive you to the front at the point of the bayonet!" The infuriated Count bundled his son into a cab which was standing near by, and ordered the driver to hurry to the front.

Alphonse, who had witnessed this scene, picked up the bundle addressed to Miss Davenport, and carried it to the salon; but as the ladies had retired, he did not disturb them. On his way to his room he dropped in upon James Osborne, and related the altercation between the De Beaumonts.

"And this bundle, Alphonse, — you have doubtless some idea of what it contains?"

TURCOS.

Alphonse coughed, and admitted that the paper was broken at one corner and he could not help observing the dress which Miss Miller had worn that evening.

"Then it is all very simple," exclaimed the war correspondent. "The spy has escaped in Jules' uniform; it may not be too late to trap him;" and he hurried after the De Beaumonts. He overtook them at the city gate, where the sentinels had refused to let them pass, and where the Count had decided to remain until morning.

On hearing Mr. Osborne's revelations the Count's anger cooled somewhat; he considered the honor of his house so far as regarded valor vindicated, and was anxious to have it proved to the satisfaction of Jules' officers and comrades. This proved, however, no easy matter. Jules was not able to report until his regiment was ordered within the gates; and on presenting himself to his captain he was instantly arrested as a deserter from the field of battle, and marched off to a military prison, and the poor Count was plunged into the deepest distress. As so often happens, his son's misfortune completely changed the Count's feelings toward him. Jules was now the most perfect of beings, and his father was disposed to look with leniency even upon his affection for Clemence. The Count hung upon Mr. Osborne, who promised to do all in his power to clear Jules at the court-martial.

Mrs. Davenport had tendered her sympathy to the Count on hearing of Jules' misfortune, but she could think of nothing which they could do to aid him. But Melicent, though much occupied by her new duties at the hospital, found time to prove true the assertion that she made to M. de Beaumont, that she was the friend of Clemence. The poor girl was distracted by Jules' danger; but Melicent comforted her so kindly with the assurance that all would certainly be well in the end, and took such a cheerful and sympathizing view of the little love-story, that Clemence, who had always stood in awe of her young mistress, regarded her as an angel sent from heaven.

"And now," said Melicent, "that I know of the future which is before you, I want to help you fit yourself for it. You ought to have more of an education, Clemence, to be the wife of a man of Jules de Beaumont's social position."

Clemence sighed, and acknowledged that this was true, but she had studied on the sly; she was, perhaps, not so ignorant as Mademoiselle fancied. Melicent at once instituted an examination, and found that Clemence could not only read, but had made much of every opportunity to do so, and had crammed herself with a great variety of miscellaneous literature including several heavy histories. She could cipher very accurately, and had kept the accounts for the housekeeper when at the De Beaumont villa so far as adding the figures went, for, strange to say, she could not write. Melicent planned a course of study for her, and spent two hours every afternoon in hearing her lessons. She was very apt in picking up English, and read aloud to Melicent from Shakspeare and Walter Scott.

Melicent found this new life of double work more difficult than she had anticipated. The ambulances came rolling in from Vincennes and the south for the next three days with the wounded, though no one seemed able to tell whether or not the sortie had been successful. The American tents were soon filled, and they heard the young surgeon say that it was estimated that six hundred Frenchmen had been killed and over four thousand wounded in the recent attempt to break through the German line. Melicent had as one of her charges a drummer-boy who had been wounded in the arm at Champigny, and who was very anxious lest he should never be able again to shake his drumsticks. "And to think," he said, "I was doing the Prussians no harm whatever when that *vilain* ball struck me.

A PRUSSIAN PIPE.

ALICE'S MODEL.

The troops were resting, and I had picked up a Prussian pipe and was thinking that there was a fine souvenir of the day, when, *ping!* they gave me another, which so distracted my attention that I dropped the pipe, and I 've no doubt that some one else picked it up. It was a fine pipe, with a porcelain bowl painted with roses. I was foolish to drop it; but, you see, the shot surprised me."

"I know of a shop on the boulevard," said Melicent, where they sell souvenirs supposed to have been found on battlefields, and I will try to find you a pipe, if you wish."

The boy's eyes brightened, and Melicent made a long circuit that day to fulfil her promise, though she was very weary. She found one which exactly answered the boy's description, and was repaid for her trouble by hearing him declare that it was the very one which he had found and lost. The boy grew delirious after this, but was often soothed and calmed by the sight of his beautiful porcelain pipe.

Melicent was growing forgetful of self and thoughtful of others; less arrogant, more gentle and pitiful. Her cheeks paled, and there were dark hollows under her eyes; but her voice had gained a sweeter tone, and James Osborne, as he caught sight of her now and then as he came and went with the ambulances, thought that she was acquiring a new spiritual beauty which made her more irresistible while it lifted her farther away from him.

One of Alice's patients was a Turco from Algiers, — an ugly, repulsive man who spoke only Arabic. Alice won his heart by bringing him a little bottle of attar of rose. The great nostrils dilated with pleasure, and the face lost the ferocious expression which had rendered it so frightful, and it only needed Alice's presence after that to make him tractable. "I shall make a study of him when he recovers," Alice remarked one morning.

"You will never persuade him to sit for you," said Mr. Osborne. "The Mohammedans believe that they forfeit their souls if they allow any one to paint their portraits."

Mr. Osborne did not understand the Turco's gratitude. Some weeks later, when Alice's desire was explained to him, he replied, through the interpretation of a *chasseur d'Afrique*, that as the young lady had kept his soul in his body, it was henceforth at her service; and he presented himself at the studio, glorious in caftan and burnous, well content to aid her as a model.

So the days, weary and sad as they were, were not without their recompense; but perhaps the most salutary lesson which Melicent learned at this time was, that after all she was of very little use. The work of the entire Red Cross Society could avail so little to undo the horrors of war. Men were dying all about her, and medical science was powerless to repair the destruction which military science had so ingeniously made. "War is a poor business," said Mr. Osborne, sadly; and Melicent could but agree with him as she thought: —

"The air is full of farewells for the dying,
And mournings for the dead;
The heart of Rachel, for her children crying,
Will not be comforted."

CHAPTER X.

WHY THE SORTIE FAILED.

HEN the Saxons retired from their attack on the outpost, they took up Captain Müller and bore him within their own lines. Here a *Johanniter* (surgeon) was waiting with two *Krankentrager* (litter-carriers) for the wounded, and to his care they committed the supposed deserter.

Wounded in the back, the right scapula splintered, it was bad, bad every way, the surgeon said, as he removed the gay cuirass which had been so disgraced. What could have been this young Frenchman's motive for deserting? The wound was dressed, and the patient placed on his left side on the litter and carried several miles farther up the Marne to a lonely mill, which had been set apart as a temporary hospital. There were no patients in it now, as they had been recently removed to Versailles; and Père Gourdin, the honest miller, who had been much confused by the occupation of his premises by wounded Germans, had begun to recover from his daze and to rearrange his meal-bags with the hope of soon seeing the great wheel turn once more in its place. Great was his disgust, late this cold November night, on being roused from a dream of peace and plenty, of troops of donkeys bringing sacks of corn, by a demand for shelter for another wounded. "There is one comfort," he grumbled to himself, as he

lighted a lamp, "there is one less Prussian to fight my country;" but as the light flared on the blackened hair and such uniform as Captain Müller still wore, he started. "Name of a pig!" he exclaimed, "*c'est un Français!*" and he bestirred himself with more than usual alacrity to make his guest comfortable. Captain Müller had so far revived before the surgeon retired for the night, as to be able to converse, and he earnestly begged the physician to send for some officer of rank, that he might make important disclosures.

"You may make them to me," said the consequential physician, "and I will judge whether they are of sufficient importance to be carried to headquarters."

Captain Müller then disclosed the plan of forcing the German lines, and urged that the Prussian troops be concentrated in the direction of the intended sortie.

"My bright fellow," replied the surgeon, "you will pardon me that I do not believe you are a German. You are a young man of ideas, but fortunately we Germans are also not born without brains. It was a brilliantly conceived scheme of yours, to pretend to be a deserter, and get us to mass our troops on some unimportant point while the French army directed its forces on some other and unprotected spot. Let me assure you, for your comfort, my young strategist, that we have also important designs on the very point on which you advise us to advance, and we will push our forces tomorrow through the Bois de Vincennes. So do not excite yourself by marching the German army about in your mind, for be you friend or foe to it, it can manage very well without your assistance."

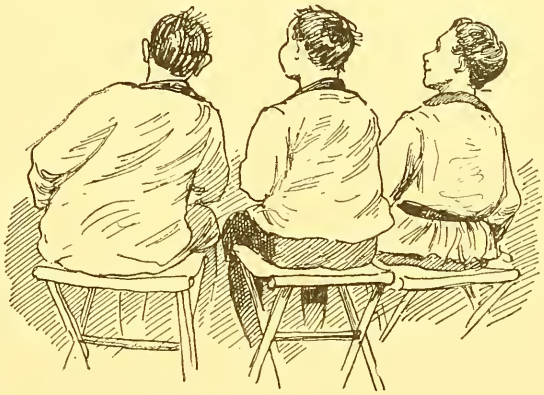
Père Gourdin had listened thus far, and now retreated to the grinding-room, where his three sons were waiting his appearance. They drew up some camp-stools, which had been left by the Germans, and listened eagerly to what he had to say.

"I do not understand it all exactly," said Père Gourdin, "but there is to be a sortie somewhere, and the surgeon says the Saxons

JOHANNITER WAITING FOR THE WOUNDED.

are going to try to-morrow to get into the Bois de Vincennes, where there is likely no one to hinder their marching on Paris."

"To do that they must cross the Marne," said Jacques, who was always quickest at expedients; "and if we should cut our dam it would overflow its banks and carry away all the bridges, and they could not get across."



THE MILLER'S BOYS.

"That would be a fine thing to do," said Jean. "*Nom d'un chien!* but I would like to see our surgeon's face when he saw the freshet."

"We would all look very stupid," said Colin, assuming a look of more utter imbecility than the one he usually wore. "Eh! Monsieur, the river has risen? But it is impossible; it is not the spring of the year. It must be they have had an earlier season than usual in Russia, and the snow has already melted."

"*Tiens!*" exclaimed the Père Gourdin; "but if we cut the dam the water will carry away the mill."

"All the better," said Jacques; "then they cannot use our property any longer as a hospital for the invaders."

"You are right," cried Jean; "and let it sweep away this beast of a surgeon with it. We may congratulate ourselves on having done one good night's work for France."

Colin said nothing, but took down an axe from the wall.

"*Tiens, tiens!*" said Père Gourdin, "we must not be too hasty. I will go up and ask the cuirassier whether this is a good plan. If he approves we will do it."

Cautiously the old man stole up to the granary, where Captain Müller was lying, staring with fixed gaze before him, desperate, maddened that all his labor was lost through the pig-headedness of this Saxon surgeon. His wound was a matter of little consequence; he would not have minded death in the service of his fatherland, he had risked it a thousand times already, and he would have thought himself happy to lay down his life now, if only the army could be warned through him and this sortie prevented. He did not believe the surgeon's information that an attack was already planned in this direction; if so, it was likely to prove unsuccessful, for they could not know that the greater part of the French army were waiting beyond the Marne to make a desperate dash for liberty.

As Père Gourdin stole into the room, with his finger on his lip and a significant gesture toward the sleeping Krankentrager, Captain Müller looked up, wondering what could be the motive of his visit.

The old man crept to his bedside and whispered his plan. "Would it be a good idea to cut the mill-dam, so that no troops could cross the Marne to-morrow?"

"Excellent, excellent! the very thing!" exclaimed Captain Müller; "how finely they would be penned in!" And then he paused, for he knew that this old man must think that in some way this would serve France. "Yes, that would be grand," he said; "and you shall be paid enough in louis d'or to rebuild your mill."

The old miller nodded in delight. "I will go out and help the boys," he whispered; "and when it is nearly done we will come in and carry you out."

Up at the locks the four worked rapidly. It was a dark night, and the surgeon and his attendants within the mill slept soundly. The old man held the lantern for the lads, whose blows rained with hearty good-will. The water seemed to share in their excitement;

it swirled through the broken barriers as though eager to tear them away.

"Quick, Father," shouted Jean; "get out the cuirassier, or it will be too late."

The miller ran along the shore; but, racing with him, a float of logs came tearing down the mill-race, and beat against the little bridge which connected the mill with the mainland with the force of battering-rams. It flew apart in splinters just as the miller's foot was on its first plank, and he drew back in horror as he saw that he was too late.

"Then beaten foam flew all about,
And all the mighty floods were out!"

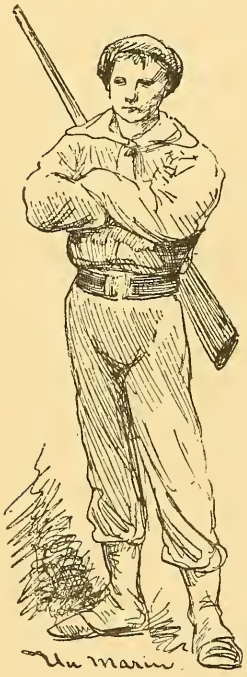
The dam gave way with a tremendous crash. The leaping, plunging cataract seized the mill in its tawny arms, and lifting it clear from its foundations carried it down the wild river. The miller stood aghast as the old mill swept out of sight. His two older sons joined him a few moments later, carrying Colin, who had been struck by a beam, and whom they had rescued with difficulty. "Hurry, Father," they cried, "the water will be stopped at the lower mills; if the dam holds, then it will back in this direction, and all the country round be flooded." They hastened to higher ground, and none too quickly, for morning revealed a wide-spread inundation.

The sortie had been unsuccessful. While General Vinoy's troops, composed chiefly of sailors from the forts, had almost secured L'Hay and Choisy, General Ducrot discovered that the Marne had overflowed its bed, and that it was impossible to cross with the troops and make the little excursion to Orleans as had been planned.

It was asserted that the rise in the river had been effected by the Saxons, who had received news of the plan and had cut a dam a little above the point decided upon for placing the pontoons, which were now too few to reach across; but how such news could have

been transmitted was not known. No one knew that the mischief had been done with the best intentions toward France, and that the miller comforted Colin, now a helpless cripple, with the assurance that he had saved Paris. (See note, p. 198.)

We left Sallie in an unenviable situation. Lieutenant Schwarz was in possession of the partly-burned letter which Captain Müller had sent her. She passed a sleepless night wondering what the result would be. He would doubtless give it to Colonel von Lindenthal, and then, would she be arrested for suppressing information? The Colonel had praised her inability to act the spy for the French; would he be as much pleased on ascertaining her unwillingness to aid the Germans in the same way? It almost seemed the part of wisdom to forestall any unpleasant consequences by immediate flight; but where could she go? As she stood irresolute and almost desperate, Madame tapped at the door.



A SAILOR.

"Come and sit with me, *chérie*," she said. "I am very lonely to-night. I have had a conversation with our guest the Colonel. *C'est un vrai monstre;* he is not a man, he is a demon. He consumed for his dinner a soup of little sausages, a *hors-d'œuvre* of raw onions, an entire beefsteak, a pheasant, a pasty of eels, an English plum-pudding, a great wedge of Limburger cheese, washed down by several kinds of German wine! And he had the effrontery to tell me that this was because he had made a light breakfast on nothing but eggs and coffee. *Eleven* hard-boiled eggs, *figurez-vous*, and a quart pot of *café au lait!* Eleven cannon-balls! No

THE GAMINS BURNING NAPOLEON IN EFFIGY.

wonder he is so eager for the bombardment of Paris to begin. A man with such a stomach has no room in his body for a heart."

Sallie had had some faint idea of confiding in Madame, but it vanished now; the Countess had too many *désagréments* to confide to Sallie. She had been told that the gamins of the neighborhood were burning Napoleon III. in effigy, and this insult rankled in her Bonapartist soul. "They consider him responsible for the war, and all the evils which it has brought upon us. They forget how eager they were for it themselves, how proud they have always been of the victories of the first Napoleon. It is he who is responsible for the military spirit of France, and it is to that spirit that we owe this war."

"Has it ever struck you, Madame," Sallie asked quietly, "that both sides must suffer, no matter who wins? War seems to me every day more and more wicked. I cannot understand how any nation that considers itself civilized, not to say Christian, can authorize it."

But Madame was not in a mood to discuss generalities. "I do not know what is to become of our family after the Prussians leave," she said. "I foresee that we shall have another reign of terror; for we shall have no government, and the lower classes, who are now fighting the Prussians, will turn upon us. My gardener here is a great man with the rabble of Versailles. He belongs to some secret society for the suppression of the aristocracy. Ah! if we could only have a republic like yours in America, where all classes are at peace with one another!"

"Dear Madame, it is because we have no *classes* in America. Unhappily money makes a distinction, but it changes hands so frequently that the laborer of yesterday is often the father of the millionnaire of to-day; there are no rigid lines beyond which merit and enterprise may not cross, and the rich and the poor are so connected by family relationship that they form one class."

"That is it," said Madame; "I have heard that it is no disgrace in America for a rich girl to marry a poor young man without family distinction, provided he is personally *comme il faut*. She could not do that here. Now it would doubtless be a safeguard for us if we had some connections in the peasant class or even in the *bourgeoisie*, some *pétroleuse* who could be brought to the front in case a commune is decided upon; but alas! we have none, we are all titled; and a title will presently be as bad a target as a red coat to a band of sharp-shooters. It is for that reason that it will be a politic thing for our son to marry out of the nobility, and even to leave the country for a time. Now, my dear child, your parents are far away, and I cannot address myself to them as would be proper, but I have become greatly attached to you; tell me frankly, do you not think our Jules an admirable young man?"

As Madame spoke, Sallie heard a clatter of hoofs in the garden below, and a conviction flashed upon her that this commotion had something to do with herself. Perhaps she was to be arrested and torn from Madame, and she would never again have an opportunity to influence her. It was one of those intense moments when the mind decides and acts instantaneously. If she were to die in half an hour, what would be the most important thing with which to occupy this last twenty minutes?

She drew a hassock close to Madame's feet, and taking her withered hand, spoke very calmly. "Dear Madame, I have not been quite frank with you. I do not know Jules very intimately, but I know him well enough to be quite sure that he loves a dear girl of my acquaintance very tenderly, and that she loves him in return, though she has too much pride to marry him without a welcome from you."

"And this is doubtless one of your friends in Paris. I wish it had been you, dear child; but love will go where it is sent, and Cupid is a very crooked marksman. Well, since you do not care

THE CROWN PRINCE.

for my boy, it is perhaps all for the best, and I must give my consent."

"Yes, dear friend, it is certainly for the best, and Jules' choice is one of my friends, though not an American. She belongs to the class with which you just said it would be politic to form an alliance, but she is refined by nature and capable of culture. Her love for Jules will make her docile and teachable, a better daughter than I would be, Madame."

But the Countess had stiffened; she was quick of perception, and she at once divined of whom Sallie was speaking.

"Do not mention her name," she said coldly; "my son marry a peasant? Never!" Both were silent for a few moments. The candles in the Sèvres candelabra ran gutters, but Madame did not notice it, and Sallie quietly changed them. At length the older woman spoke, as though to herself: "Then Clemence is not dead. I am glad of that; I feared she had drowned herself. She was a high-spirited little puss, and when I saw her last, and told her that she must give my son up, she answered that she would do so, but that some day I should entreat her in vain, — the insolent! I have pictured her dead in my dreams, and my son has broken my heart with his reproaches, and I have dreamed that I did indeed entreat her in vain; but if she is living, that is another thing. She will keep

CLEMENCE AT THE FÊTE.

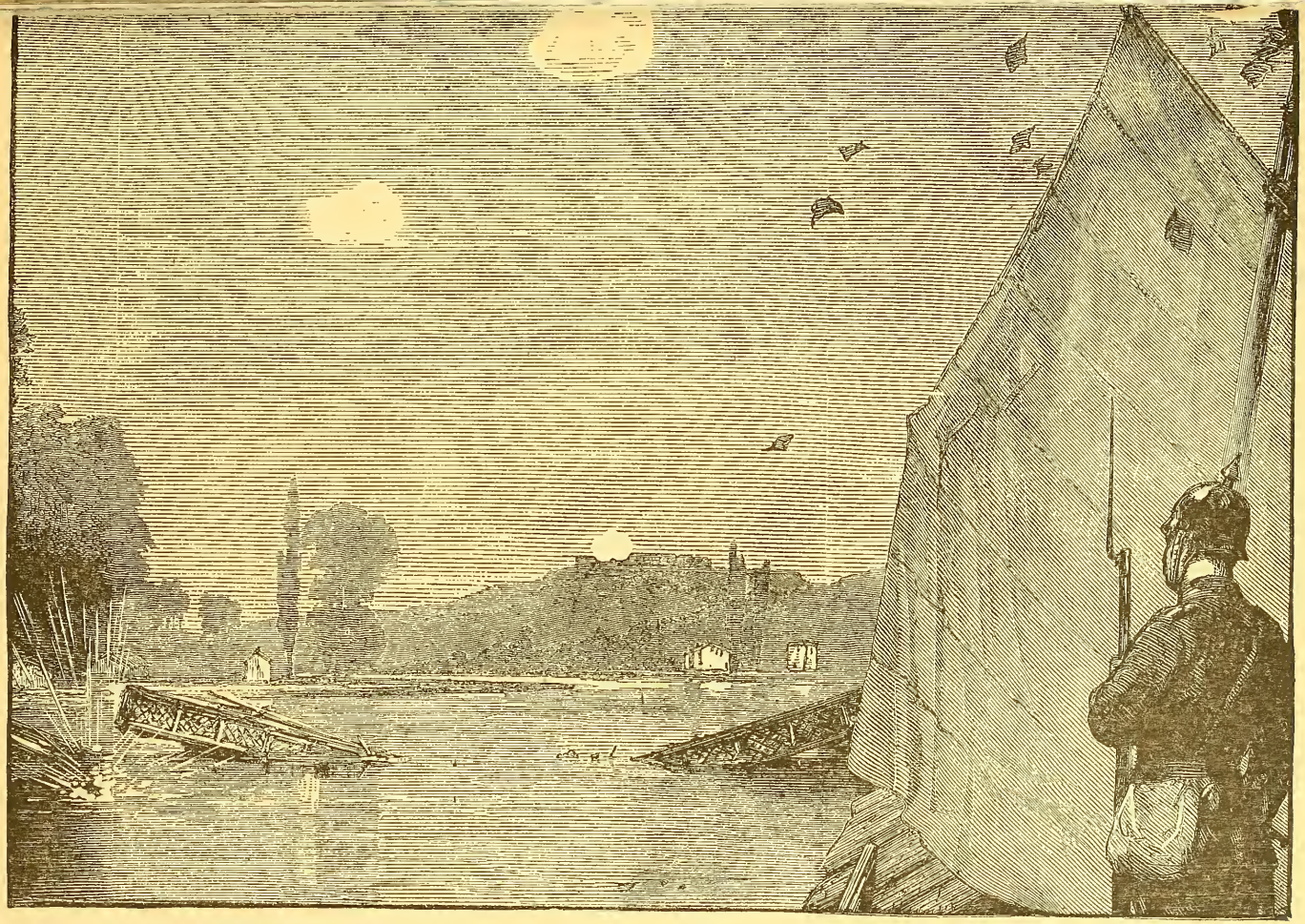
her promise not to marry my son. So much the better; little fear that I will ask her to break it. And yet she had a certain style. I have seen her at a fête in a pretty pink dress with ruffles, with a Parisian hat and parasol, really far more attractive than the daughter of the Duchesse de Sangbleu, — really with the air of a little princess. I don't wonder Jules fancied her; and if it were not for her relations, — but, Mère Babette and I on the same footing! *Quelle horreur!*"

Madame's soliloquy was interrupted by a knock at the door, and Jacques the butler announced that Colonel von Lindenthal would like to see the ladies in the salon. Sallie rose mechanically. She felt that her time was out, the hour of her sentence had arrived; she had used her time to the best of her ability for Clemence, and had failed.

Madame looked annoyed. "What can the Colonel want so late in the evening? My nerves are all unstrung. Go to him for me, dear child; and Jacques, bring me a glass of *cassis* (black currant wine), and tell Mathilde to come and comb my hair, — that is always soothing; only the awkward one has not quite the knack of Clemence."

Sallie descended to the salon, and to her surprise found only Lieutenant Schwarz. "I knew you would not answer a summons of mine, Mademoiselle," he said, in explanation. "The Colonel has been called to headquarters, and I wanted to apologize for my rudeness, and to return this partly-destroyed letter. You need not have burned it. It is from an honorable man. Captain Müller is well known to me. We were students together at Heidelberg, and whatever correspondence you may have with him, whether of a political or a personal nature, shall always have my respectful consideration."

The Lieutenant bowed stiffly, but profoundly; he was evidently embarrassed. Sallie, much surprised at the turn matters had taken, accepted the letter and his apology, and left him as quickly as possible. So there was no need for haste, after all, and she might



ON THE SEINE, — BOUGIVAL BRIDGE.

have chosen a better time for speaking to Madame. But was it best to put off important matters when life was so uncertain? A line from an old hymn —

"Live this day as 't were thy last,"

came to her mind, and on the whole she was glad that she had spoken. Long after, as Melicent and she compared notes of their efforts in behalf of this distressed couple, the grotesque side of the affair appealed to her.

"While the mother was proposing to you," said Melicent, "the father was proposing to me. What would have become of poor Jules if we had both accepted him, when he cared for neither of us?"

"Fortunately," said Sallie, "an American girl, although romantic enough to enjoy and sympathize in a little love-story acted before her eyes, is not so eager for matrimony or crazy for a title as quite to make a fool of herself."

Sallie's conversation with the Countess was not so inopportune as she had imagined. It sank deep into Madame's conscience, and wrought slowly and silently, while she made no outward sign except to grow more pettish and captious.

Days went by. The grand marshal Winter arrived, to annoy both French and Germans, — not a hearty, exhilarating winter, with dry snow and merry sleigh-rides, but a rainy, deadly cold creeping into the joints and freezing the marrow. The beds at Versailles were filled with pneumonia patients, and rheumatism lamed more soldiers than the Franctireurs. The Crown Prince was assiduous in his care for the wounded, both French and Prussian. His humanitarian ideas formed a strong contrast to Bismarck's want of sensibility, and the suffering all around him must have deeply pained his noble heart.

One day early in December Colonel von Lindenthal came to Sallie with some startling news. A house carried away by a freshet had gone to pieces against one of the bridges of the river, and some persons clinging to the timbers had been rescued by the German

soldiers; among them was a wounded French cuirassier. He had been taken to Versailles; but the vicissitudes through which he had passed, in addition to his wound, had been too much for him, and he was now raving in brain fever. Some articles of his clothing bore the name Jules de Beaumont, and the Colonel wished Sallie to ascertain whether he was a relative of Madame.

It was a great shock, but Sallie broke it very tenderly to the Countess; and as Colonel von Lindenthal offered to arrange for the wounded man to be brought directly to his own home, Jules' old room was put in order for his reception.

Very carefully the Krankentrager brought him in and laid him upon his bed. Madame, unwilling to betray her emotion, kept in the next room until the men had gone; then she dropped Sallie's hand and flew into the sick-chamber. Sallie heard a strange shriek, and the cry, "This is not my son!" then a heavy fall, and, following, found Madame lying by the bed in a swoon, while the face on the pillow was not that of Jules de Beaumont, but of Captain Müller.

NOTE. Edward King, in his "Europe in Storm and Calm," thus describes the result of the actions on the Marne: —

"The failure of the French to cross the Marne in the night of the 28th, gave the Germans twenty-four hours in which to concentrate fresh troops. On the 30th of November, early in the morning, the two first French divisions crossed the river [which we may imagine had fallen, though Mr. King believes that the engineers had now supplied the needed pontoons]. A series of battles took place along the plateau of Avron on the heights of Montmédy, Creteil, Joinville-le-Pont, Noisy-le-Grand, and Villiers-sur-Marne.

"The French troops at first fought magnificently against the vast numbers of the enemy which now flocked down upon them.

"The fighting lasted for five days. On the 4th of December General Ducrot announced that he had brought his army back across the Marne, because he was convinced that new efforts in a direction where the enemy had had plenty of time to concentrate all its forces would be useless. The whole country for miles around was filled with the marks of the sanguinary struggle. Ten thousand dead men of the two races were strewn along the frozen hills, and nothing had been done to change the destiny of Paris. On the evening of the 6th of December Von Moltke informed General Trochu, in a note of icy politeness and Spartan brevity, that the army of the Loire had been defeated on the previous day near Orleans, and that the city had been occupied by the victorious [German] troops. Starvation and bitter winter weather had come at the close of an unsuccessful sortie, to urge the Parisians to yield; yet they held out with a bravery which has never been surpassed in the history of the world."

CHAPTER XI.

A SAD CHRISTMAS-TIDE.

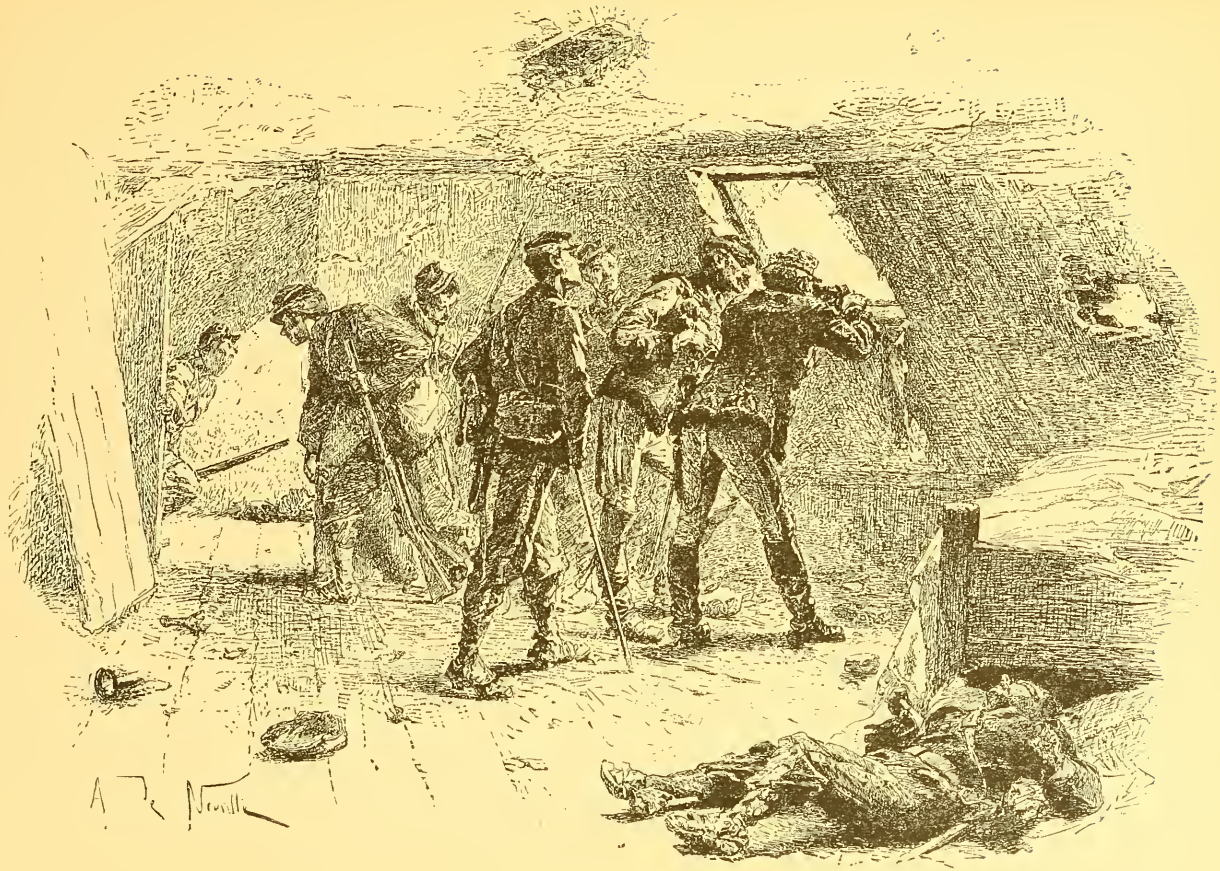
MADAME did not rally, but passed from one fainting fit into another, and when consciousness was restored seemed not to be quite sane. She wept hysterically, and insisted that the Germans had killed her son and had tried to palm off this stranger upon her. Mathilde waited upon the wounded soldier (though with evident reluctance when she ascertained that he was not a Frenchman), but she was helpless as regarded Madame, and poor Sallie's hands were more than full. It was late at night before the Countess sank into a troubled sleep and Sallie could creep downstairs and make a report to Colonel von Lindenthal. He was much surprised to hear that their guest was Captain Müller, and sent for a surgeon at once, with the intention of having him sent back to the hospital. The doctor, however, was of the opinion that the wounded man had already been moved about too much, and must be kept very quiet. Madame awoke during the physician's visit, and was so wild and incoherent that Sallie asked him to see her. He looked very grave, and having heard the circumstances, told Sallie that the Countess was suffering from a severe nervous shock, and was in a very critical condition.

Dark indeed were the days which followed. The sleet beat drearily upon the windows, and the wistaria struck its leafless branches against the pane with the same restless motion with which Madame tossed her arms from side to side.

There was much suffering among the Germans. The hospital was full, and the poor men in the camp were all attacked with *heimweh* (homesickness) as they thought of the merry holiday season approaching, and the good *Frau* and children at home, with no father to enjoy with them their Christmas-tree. An impatience to finish the siege and to march for home seized them, and they clamored for the bombardment which was delayed for some to them unaccountable reason. It seemed to be the German policy to wait, before resorting to this extreme measure, until the endurance of Paris should be worn out by hardship and famine. Christmas came, and it was pitiful to see how the soldiers tried to celebrate that day so dear to every German heart. Colonel von Lindenthal told of one Christmas-tree which he had seen made of a sheaf of guns, tallow candles fastened to the bayonets, and the gifts sent through the mail by wives and sweethearts festooned between them. The Colonel had received a warm knitted comforter from his own good Frau; and Lieutenant Schwarz showed Sallie an elaborate watch-guard which a certain Fraulein Minna, of Dresden, had braided for him of her own hair. The Lieutenant was very kind, trying in every possible way to make amends for his rudeness in the matter of the letter. He sat with Captain Müller while he needed an attendant at night, and brought little delicacies, and ran errands, with serene good-humor. Captain Müller improved, but Madame's condition grew worse, and Sallie felt her own health giving way between her double charges. Pierre the gardener was a great help to her, and shared with Lieutenant Schwarz in the care of Captain Müller. One morning, after a sleepless night spent by Madame's bedside, Sallie ran down to the gate-lodge to consult Pierre.

"Is there no nurse whom I can get to help me?" she asked; "I am willing to do all I can, but, oh, Pierre, I am afraid I shall give out, or perhaps fall asleep when I ought to be watching."

Pierre rubbed his poll until his stubby hair resembled a straw-stack. Suddenly his look of perplexity changed to one of inspiration.



WITHIN THE CITY.

"I have it," he exclaimed. "Mère Babette!"

"I don't know," Sallie replied dubiously; but her limbs trembled with fatigue, and her brain reeled giddily. She returned to the sick-chamber, and Pierre set out on foot for Ferrières; for all the horses at Versailles had been appropriated by the conquerors.

Three days later, Mère Babette took the weary girl's place, and Sallie slept soundly for twenty-four hours. After this long refreshing rest she was able to take her turn with the faithful old woman. She dreaded the time when Madame should recognize her nurse; but, strange to say, the meeting created no excitement on the part of the sick woman. She said, simply, "Is that you, my good Babette?" and closed her eyes quite contentedly.

AT PIERRE'S COTTAGE.

As she grew stronger, the two women, of such different stations in life, talked of the past, and Sallie learned that Mère Babette had been Madame's *sœur de lait*, — the child of Madame's nurse, and the playmate of her childhood. Madame was quite sure that her son had been killed; and she talked of him freely to Mère Babette, and of his affection for Clemence.

"If he had lived," she said, "the young people might have married, and have begun a new life away in America, where everything is so different from here."

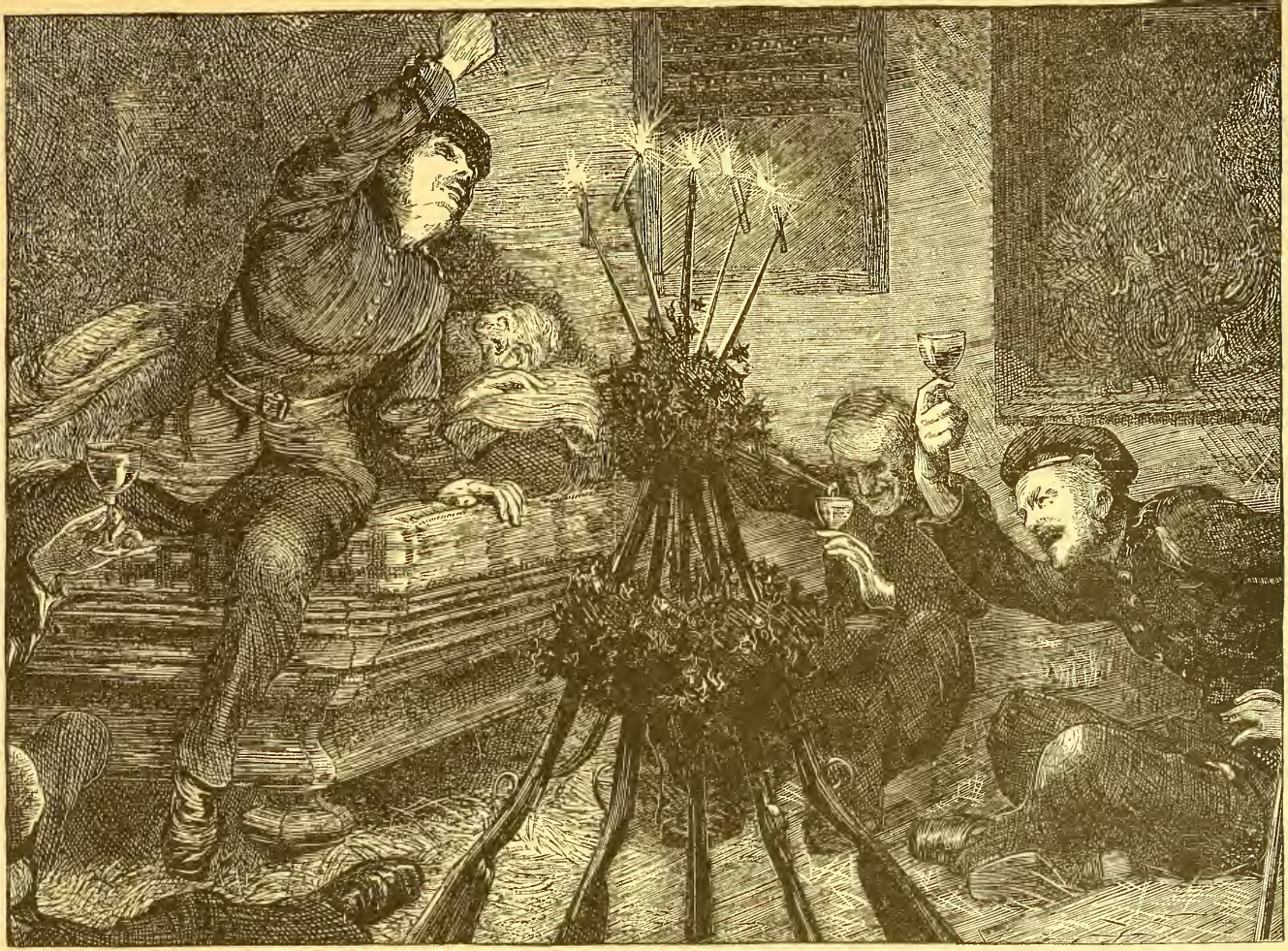
Madame had passed through a cruel discipline, but it was needed

to bend her pride; and only in the light of her son's death could this marriage have seemed possible to her. Mère Babette, who had received Alice's letter, was more hopeful; but she dared not encourage Madame too much, for fear that her heavenly frame of mind might change to a more worldly one.

WAITING FOR THE CONFESSOR.

Mère Babette was very happy just now with a trembling kind of happiness which was hardly sure of itself, and when not on duty with the Countess she was frequently to be seen at the church waiting for the confessor or putting up prayers for Clemence.

Now and then Sallie glanced into the next room where Pierre was tending Captain Müller since he had recovered consciousness. She was shyer than at first, though she longed to hear of her friends at the Maison Duval; but there came a time when he was able to walk about, and when the other officers helped him into the salon, and



"IT WAS PITIFUL TO SEE THE SOLDIERS TRY TO CELEBRATE."

Colonel von Lindenthal had him bolstered in his favorite fauteuil, — the one in which the Empress had sat. The Crown Prince visited him, and other of his comrades dropped in to cheer his weariness and to read him the German papers. In spite of these attentions he was often listless and absent-minded, or would look up quickly when a light footstep sounded in the hall, or the click of a French-heeled slipper on the waxed staircase. Sallie's duties with Madame did not account for this continued avoidance, and he began to feel that she might be a little kinder. He had confused memories of her bending over him in his delirium, administering medicines, flitting about his room like a ministering angel; but now she never entered the chamber. She had come into the salon once and had gravely shaken hands with him in the presence of Colonel von Lindenthal and Lieutenant Schwarz, congratulating him upon his recovery; but there were hours when she knew him to be quite alone, when she might have given him an opportunity to explain any misunderstanding which there might be between them, and still she kept herself in strict seclusion. One day, when he was feeling a little stronger than usual, he opened the piano with the arm that was not strapped to his side, and began with one hand to play the air, —

> "Wenn i' komm', wenn i' komm', wenn i' wiedrum komm',
> Kehr ich, mein Schatz, bei dir."

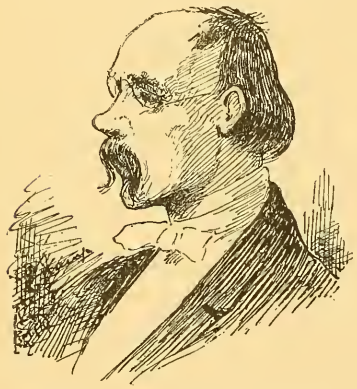
Sallie heard it, and, what was more, the Captain knew that she heard it, for a quick step crossed the floor in the room above, and the door closed. Sallie had shut out the sound. The young soldier flushed hotly, then, returning to his chair, sat staring moodily before him until the return of Colonel von Lindenthal. That good man noticed his depression.

"You are too much alone," he said; "you need company to cheer you up. Now, you are not to have your dinner brought in here to-day, but we will have you wheeled into the dining-room to dine with us."

A little later, Colonel von Lindenthal sent a request to Sallie to preside at the table if Madame did not require her presence. As the Countess was more comfortable than usual, Sallie could not refuse, and appeared at dinner in a pretty gray cashmere with a little shawl of pink China crêpe drawn down in a prim way over her shoulders. It had been a very becoming fichu; but just now the bright color served as a contrast to Sallie's pale cheeks, and Captain Müller, who sat opposite, noticed how thin and white she had grown, and the dark lines under her eyes.

"Has this come through care of me?" he thought, self-reproachfully; and then he banished the idea. Surely she did not care for him sufficiently to weary herself on his account.

A German journalist was their guest that day, — a painfully plain young man, partially bald in spite of his youth, his weak eyes masked with student spectacles. He talked philosophy, and looked greatly surprised when Sallie showed herself conversant with Kant and Wöpcke. The discussion passed to other topics, — the idea of an international congress which should decide all matters of dispute between nations, and do away forever with the horrors of war. Sallie spoke warmly on this subject, saying that she did not see how a Christian could possibly justify war.



"HE TALKED PHILOSOPHY."

Captain Müller replied by citing Count von Bismarck's deep sense of personal responsibility to God.

"His favorite motto is '*Gott mit uns!*' I have heard him say," he added, "that he cannot understand how men can live together, each doing his duty, without faith in a God who wills what is good, in a Supreme Judge, and in a future life."

"Yes," said Colonel von Lindenthal, "I remember his remarking, one evening at Ferrières, 'If I could not count upon my God, assuredly I should not do so upon earthly masters.'"

"That is very noble," Sallie replied; "I cannot help admiring such earnestness. Your chief's sense of responsibility to God, and conviction that he is upheld by Him, is no doubt the secret of his greatness. And yet is it not possible that he may be mistaken in what he conceives to be God's will? So many crimes have been committed in the name of religion, so many martyrs burned by men who verily believed that they were doing God service, that it is at least possible that future ages may refuse to believe that God willed this war."

"But is it not better," queried Captain Müller, "to make a mistake conscientiously, than to throw over all idea of duty, living only for the pleasure of the day, every man for himself, in a spirit of unbridled selfishness and license? Contrast the Communistic authorization of theft, implied in its assertion of the immorality of property, which must end in universal riot and pillage, with the German idea that God rules in the earthly ruler, and tell me whether the French or the German nation rests on surer foundations."

Sallie shook her head lightly. "I am not taking sides with poor France," she replied, "only arguing against war in the abstract."

"And you have upheld your side of the argument very well," said Colonel von Lindenthal, gallantly. "I fear that we cannot bring Holy Writ to our support in this matter, though the worthy Frau von Bismarck has recently sent a Bible by mail to her husband (fearing, as she said, that there were none to be found in France), in order that he might be able to read the prophecy in it against the French."

"And pray what was it?" Sallie asked.

"The word 'France' was not used," replied Colonel von Lindenthal, "but it is obvious that the French are meant: 'I say unto thee that the wicked shall be rooted out.'"

A general laugh followed, and Colonel von Lindenthal gave Sallie

his arm, asking her to play for them, as he had greatly missed the piano during their hospital season.

"A German," he said, "cannot exist without music; and some of our soldiers have carried pianos from the unoccupied houses to the trenches, and hold open-air concerts at which the French mitrailleuses are liable any moment to assist."

Sallie seated herself at the instrument, and "Songs without Words" and "Traumerei" presently filled the soldiers' hearts with longing for home. Jacques lighted the candles in the sconces, and Sallie played on, not noticing that an aide had summoned the officers away, and that her only auditor was Captain Müller. When she became aware of this she rose, saying that she must go to Madame.

"Wait a moment," he pleaded. "I have been living for a long time with your friends in Paris; do you not wish to hear from them?"

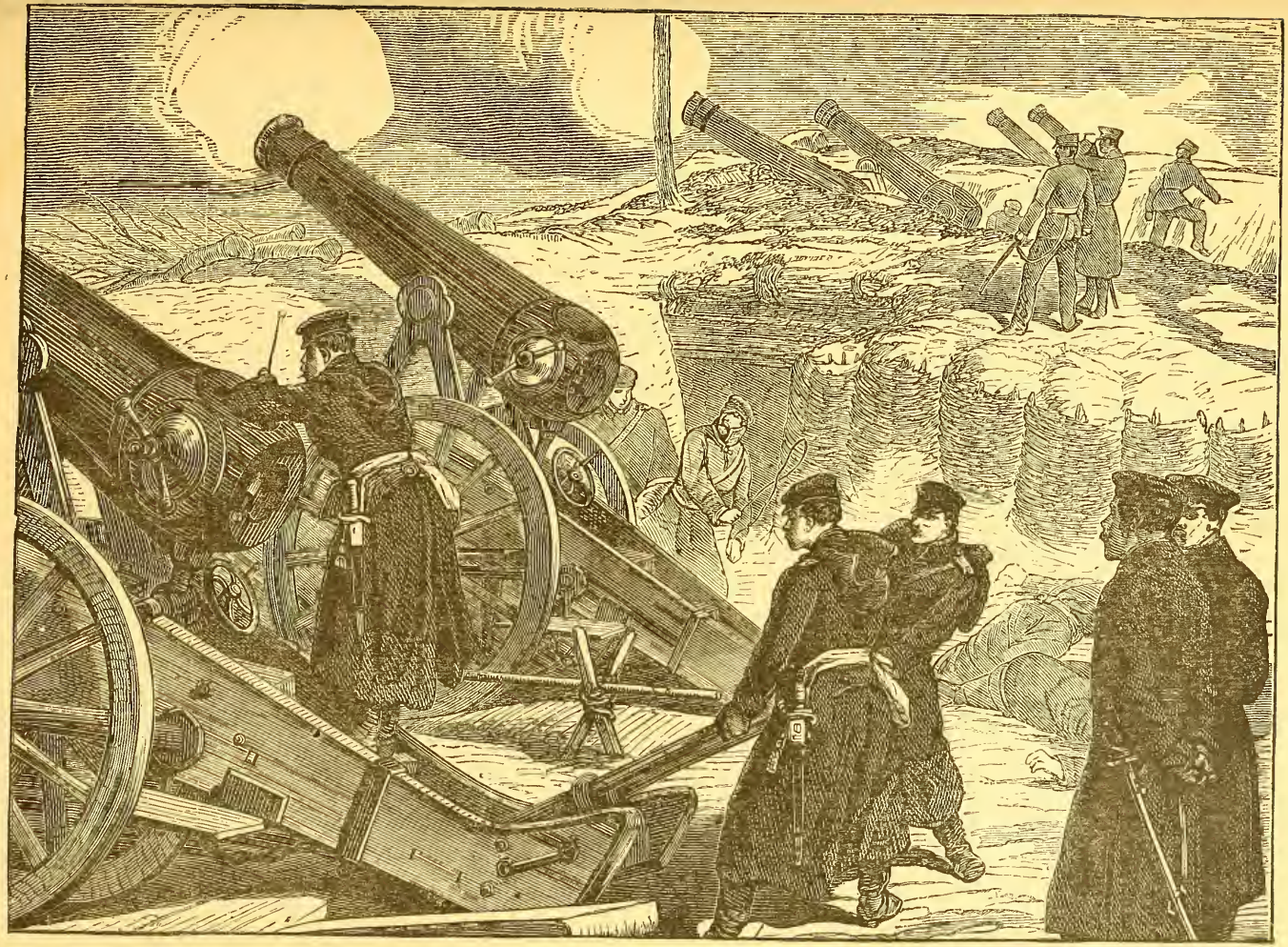
"Tell me only," Sallie replied, "whether they are all well."

"Then tell me first whether you are angry with me for having used your papers and a part of your costume to effect my entrance into the city."

"I do not know to what extent you deceived my friends, or what use you made of the intimacy which they so trustfully afforded you."

"No dishonorable use, I assure you;" and the Captain, certain that he now understood the cause of Sallie's coldness, poured forth an account of his stay at the Maison Duval, praising the goodness of Mrs. Davenport and the two girls, and setting forth the entire experience in such an amusing and interesting manner, that Sallie, who had thought to leave at once, stood on the threshold for fully an hour. She might have remained longer, had not Mère Babette crept downstairs to say that Madame had insisted on rising and being dressed, and now wanted to come down to the salon.

"If she is strong enough, I would like to tell her about her son," said Captain Müller; and Sallie flew upstairs, anxious to communicate to Madame the relief and happiness which she felt in hearing from her



INSIDE A SIEGE BATTERY.

own dear ones. It was some time before she could persuade the Countess to see the man who had given her such a shock. Sallie patiently explained all the circumstances, and Madame finally understood that in filching her son's uniform the spy had probably received a shot intended for Jules, while the young man himself was safe in Paris. After this her impatience to see Captain Müller fully equalled her former aversion. Sallie and Mère Babette assisted her to descend, and the two convalescents took each other's hands and looked into each other's faces, not as enemies, but as friends.

"It is all *incroyable!*" said Madame, after a long conversation, in which Captain Müller had answered a hundred questions, and had told her of the changed aspect of Paris, — of the Grand Opera, with its lower story converted into a reservoir of water, and the upper stories into warerooms of military supplies; of the *foyers* of the different theatres used as hospitals, and sisters of charity elbowing the actresses in the passages; of the elephants and other animals at the Jardin des Plantes slaughtered and sold as food; of the Grande Hôtel appropriated as the Ambulance de la Presse; of the suffering met by prompt charity, and the heroism developed from frivolity. When Madame heard all this she shook her head like one dazed. "I would no longer recognize my Paris. Do not people now drive in the afternoon on the Avenue de l'Impératrice?"

Captain Müller smiled. "I learned before I left Paris," he said, "that all carriage horses were to be requisitioned by the Government for the meat supply, and there is no longer any Avenue de l'Impératrice; it is now called the Avenue d'Uhric, from the defender of Strasburg, and it is flanked by the white tents of the American Ambulance."

Madame thought for a few moments. "If there is no longer any 'society,'" she said, "then all the artificial distinctions of life must have disappeared, and people must meet each other on the plane of a common humanity."

"What you say is very nearly true," Captain Müller replied; "it is one of the good effects of this war, — in which Miss Sallie here will recognize nothing but evil, — that the French people have greatly changed in character. They have lost their vanity to a great extent, have developed from volatile braggarts into men of action and endurance. Defeat and suffering have taught them lessons for which they will be the nobler and better for a generation to come."

"*Pauvre France! pauvre France!*" said Madame, her eyes filling with tears; "but you assure me that my son is safe, and that we shall soon have peace."

As she spoke, a heavy detonation shook the house, and Lieutenant Schwarz entered the building, exclaiming gayly, "The bombardment! at last the bombardment has begun! They have unmasked two batteries of Krupp guns, and are playing on the forts. When they are dismantled, Paris will be at our mercy."

"*Monstre!*" shrieked Madame; "have you not inflicted enough misery upon us?"

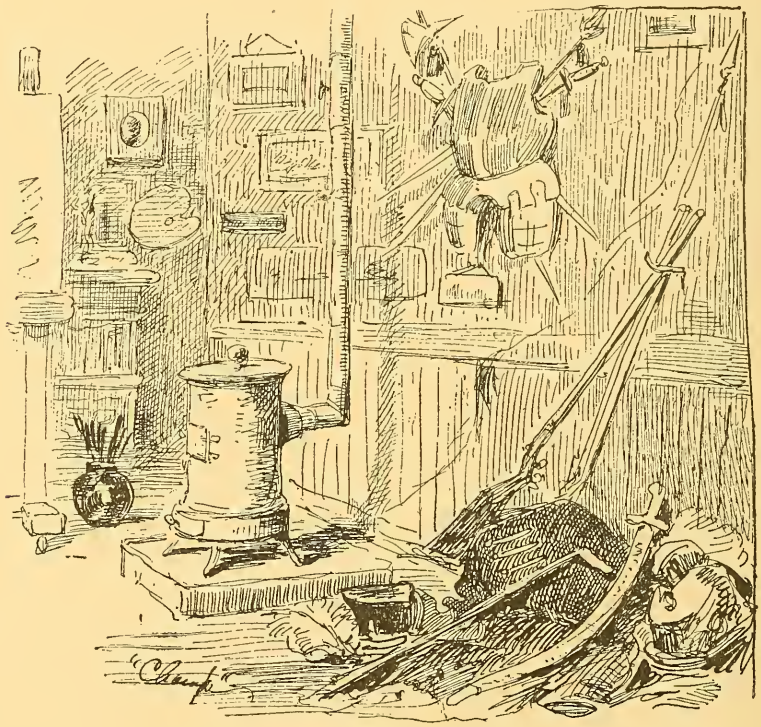
"It was necessary, my dear Madame," said Captain Müller; "without this final measure, Paris would never consent to capitulation."

CHAPTER XII.

THE BOMBARDMENT AND THE LAST SORTIE.

WITHIN Paris the Christmas-tide was even a sadder, wearier season than without the walls. Alice found her occupations at the hospital so absorbing that she gave up her studio, and Madame Duval rented it to an officer. Military accoutrements, bits of armor, and manly adornments now mingled with the paint-brushes, the easels, sketches, and studies, giving the room a bizarre and incoherent aspect, but one not uncommon in Paris; for nearly all the artists and art-students had enlisted. De Neuville, Berne Bellecour, and Detaille found the campaign a stern university in which thrilling scenes were impressed upon their memories, and they became conversant with all the details of military life, which showed themselves afterward in their many spirited pictures. Quite an army of battle-painters sprang up in Paris after the war; but it would be a mistake to argue from this fact that military ardor had increased in France. On the contrary, it had received a salutary check, and the observant on-looker could detect in these very paintings more of the pathetic than the triumphant; a protest against the horrors of war, rather than an attempt to rouse the bloodthirsty instincts. The most promising young artist in France at this time was Henri Regnault. He had obtained the Prix de Rome at the Académie des Beaux Arts, which enables the successful competitor to live four years in Rome at

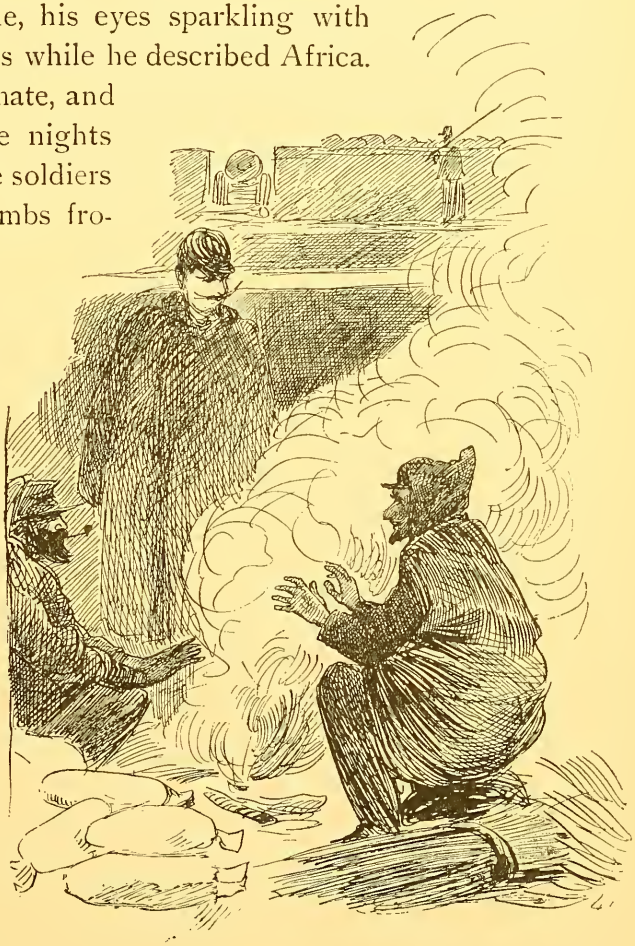
the expense of the French Government. He had painted some very remarkable pictures, among others, "Automedon breaking the Horses of Achilles," the portrait of General Prim, and the "Exécution sans Jugement,"—an Oriental scene of horrible realism and wonderful color, depicting a Moor of majestic bearing who has just decapitated a man,



BITS OF ARMOR, ETC.

and is looking with calm, impassive features at the dissevered head, while the blood drips from one little pool to another down the white marble staircase. He painted this just at the breaking out of the war, in his fascinating studio at Tangier, Africa. He was completely in love with the wonderful country in which he had begun to paint, with

the picturesque costumes and animals, the brilliant sunshine, the Moorish architecture, the tropical foliage, and his brain was teeming with subjects for new pictures; but at the first call to arms, although exempt from military service, he hastened home to enlist. He was a friend of Jules de Beaumont, and Jules had brought him to the Maison Duval, where his engaging manners and his brilliant conversation had made a most favorable impression. When animated, he was strikingly handsome, his eyes sparkling with the enthusiasm of genius while he described Africa. He loved a tropical climate, and the intense cold of the nights at Mont Valérien, where soldiers sometimes had their limbs frozen, was harder for him to bear than the danger; but he never complained, or sought in any way to shirk his duties. The girls knew that he was betrothed to a young girl whom he tenderly loved, and at the call of country he had set aside ambition and affection. It was sublime; and yet as Alice thought of the magnificent way in which he might still serve France, it seemed to her a foolish thing to



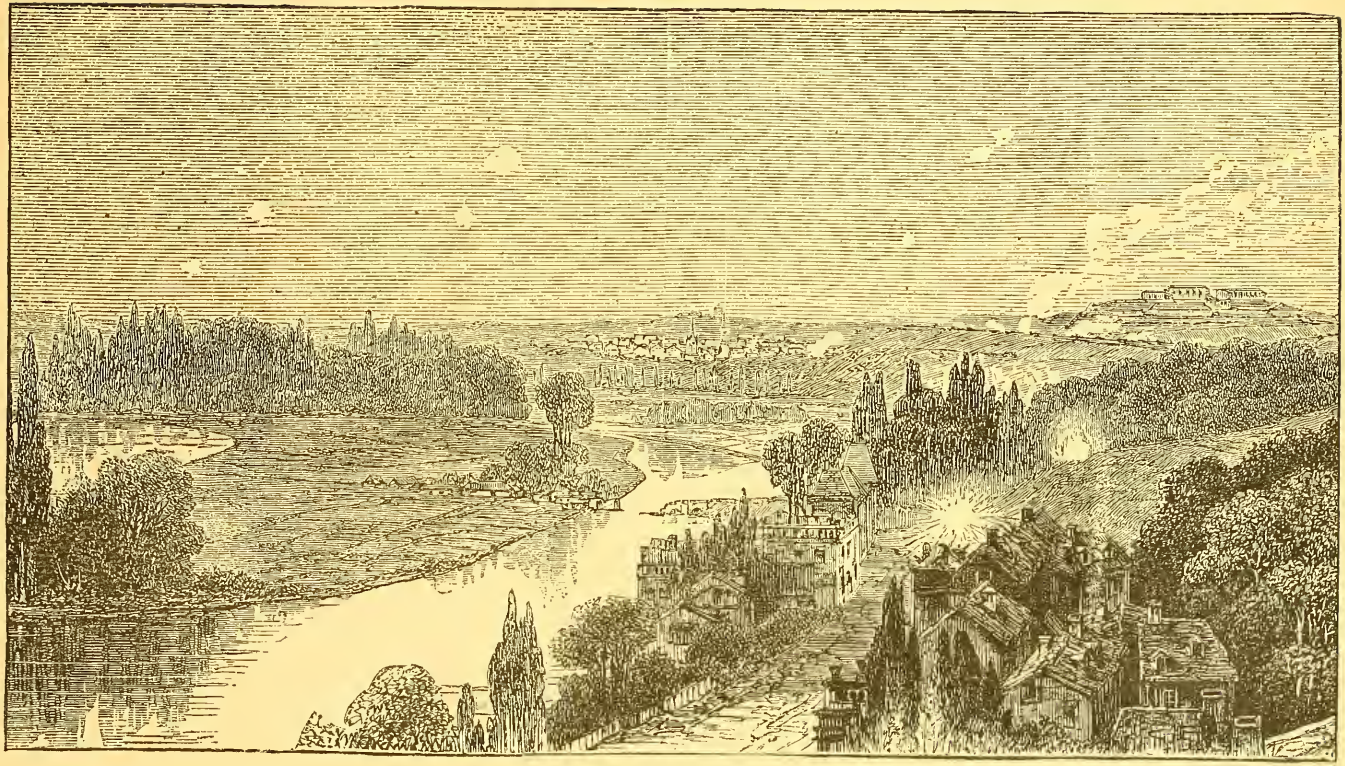
ON THE RAMPARTS.

put this exceptionally talented young man to such wanton risk. But after all, was there a single life then so worthless that it could be truthfully said that this was the best use to which it could be put?

Certainly Jules de Beaumont, light as he was, might serve a better purpose than to count one in the long category of Prussian triumphs, if only for the sake of three hearts whose entire affection was centred in him.

The poor Count was very wretched. He wandered about, feverishly begging every one to aid in clearing his son from the charge of desertion under which he lay; and at last Jules was cleared. Mr. Osborne, incited by Melicent, who had said, "You will do it for *my* sake," worked like a brother in his behalf. Both Alphonse and he testified to the presence of the spy, and proved that he must have stolen the cuirassier's uniform. Mrs. Davenport, who was interviewed on the subject, made a very clear statement, and was herself exonerated from any intention of harboring a spy. Clemence also proved an *alibi* for Jules, testifying that he was bidding her farewell in the little churchyard at the time when the sentinel at the barrier thought he saw him ride by toward Vincennes. Jean Roussel, who had been suffering the agonies of remorse, was absolutely thunderstruck at seeing his rival once more in the land of the living. He insisted that he had shot him in the back, and that the Saxons had afterward come and carried away his body. It was a miracle that he should stand there safe and sound. Others testified that they had seen Jules at the time that Jean Roussel persisted that he was lying wounded under his watch; and the conclusion became evident that this was a case of mistaken identity.

The Comte de Beaumont felt sure that the testimony of Clemence had more weight with the judges than all the rest put together, and that his son really owed his life to her. He took the young girl by the hand, after Jules was pronounced cleared, and said in his bombastic manner, which always seemed to Melicent more pathetic than amusing, "Mademoiselle, I have the honor to thank you for the distinguished



THE LAST SORTIE.

service which you have rendered our family to-day. Should this unhappy war leave me still the proud and happy father which I now am, Madame the Countess de Beaumont and myself will have the felicity to — to —" But here the Count broke down. He could not promise that his proud wife would ever ask Mère Babette to grant them her daughter in marriage, — he did not even dare ask her, and he looked helplessly from one to another. Jules came manfully to the rescue.

"Never mind, Father," he said cheerfully, "it is a great deal to us that you appreciate Clemence; I will myself arrange matters with Mother. She will give her consent when she understands everything; and Clemence is prouder still, for she will not marry me without it. After the war we shall all be happy again."

After the war! How confidently they all spoke; but though Paris had suffered severely, the end was not yet. As Jules received the congratulations of his friend Henri Regnault, the young man added, "*Tiens! C'est le moment psychologique;* the dome of the Pantheon has been struck."

Some one in authority in the German army had said that the bombardment would begin at the proper psychological moment, meaning at the exact time when it would have the greatest effect upon minds worn out by endurance carried to the utmost. All Paris had made sport of the expression, as one of pedantic German philosophy. It became a catchword with all classes. Madame Duval's customers would greet her with the expression, "I am hungry; the psychological moment has arrived to dine." Alphonse had a psychological moment for shaving, Clemence for doing each of her little household duties. The French kept up their hearts with raillery and caricature; they mocked at the idea that they could ever be disheartened. These brutes of Prussians should see that it was not so easy a thing to break their spirit. Even after the bombardment began, after the first shock of seeing the great projectiles fall, and buildings struck from time to time in the Latin Quarter, the natural French gayety reasserted itself. Com-

panies were formed to put out the fires. People rushed to the neighborhood of dangerous quarters as though they were going to a spectacle. A shell would scarcely fall before it was seized upon by gamins and sold as a souvenir of the siege. At Auteuil an innkeeper who had had his house struck several times changed his sign to *Au Rendezvous des Obus* (The Meeting-place of the Bomb-shells), and it became a popular place of resort. People were killed daily in the streets, but business was uninterrupted. It is related that when the street boys saw an especially dudish young man or a portly *bourgeois* immaculately dressed, picking his way daintily in a very muddy street, they would maliciously shout, "*L'obus, l'obus!*" and the frightened exquisite would not fail to prostrate himself in the mud, to the great amusement of the young rascal. Comparatively few people moved from the Latin Quarter, which was the part of the city exposed. Buildings were struck all around them, — the Hôpital de la Pitié, the Church of St. Sulpice, the Sorbonne, the Val de Grâce, the Luxembourg Museum, and parts of the Jardin des Plantes. In old Fort Issy one hundred men were killed and more wounded, and four hundred fell ill of exposure and privation.

Under the continued strain the gayety and derision with which the bombardment had at first been greeted diminished. A patient shrug of the shoulders took the place of the caustic remark. People grew weary at last, waiting for something, they knew not what, to happen. Evidently no foreign power would interfere in their behalf. The army of the Loire, from which they had hoped great things, they now understood was beaten. There was no help from Marseilles, from Tours, or from Orleans. Add to this, that food was becoming scarce. The bread now issued was made of rice, of oats, of hay, of every imaginable substitute for flour. Little by little, typhus was wasting the population; and yet the Government, who knew well that they must come to it at last, did not yet dare to whisper "Capitulation." There was more clear grit in the French character than Bismarck had counted upon; but it was hard for them to endure aimlessly, and

toward the middle of January a murmur arose among the populace and among the soldiers: "Why do we not do something? What are we waiting for? If these cowardly Germans will not attack us, let us sally out to meet them, and risk the combat in the open field."

Their experience at Vincennes had not taught them wisdom, and all Paris now clamored for a last decisive sortie. It was arranged for the 19th, in the direction of Montretout and Buzenval. James Osborne, who went out with the ambulances whenever they were summoned, had been up all night in order to be ready for an early start. At three o'clock the long line of carriages was ordered forward. The convalescents had been removed from the American Hospital, and many of the tents were empty. Melicent passed from one to another, arranging everything for the reception of their guests. The last glimpse that James Osborne caught of her before he sprang to his seat beside the driver showed her with her arms filled with clean linen, hastening to arrange another cot.

"How that girl loves to get ready for company!" he thought. "It was always so at her own home in more cheerful days. She was continually giving dainty touches to the rooms which were to be occupied by her friends. I verily believe that her favorite employ in heaven will be to set in order the 'many mansions.'" And as he rode on in the chill fog of the early morning, the words, "I go to prepare a place for you," kept recurring to his mind like a premonition of death.

And yet the American Hospital was not a gloomy place. At the Universal Exposition a large exhibit had been made of our hospital appliances, and these had not been removed from the city. At the breaking out of the war all that was necessary was to spread the tents along the Avenue de l'Impératrice. It was a new idea in Paris, this hospital under canvas, but it was found to be much better, with its perfect ventilation, than the close rooms of the hotels. The ground was dried and heated by subterranean furnaces, and it was a well-admitted fact that a greater proportion of patients recovered here than at the

other hospitals. Both here and throughout the city suspense was at its utmost after the departure of the troops for the last sortie. The first bulletins displayed at the Rue Drouot announced that the redoubt of Montretout had been taken after a brilliant action, and that the army had gained the Park of Buzenval. An intensely excited crowd waited for further news. The second bulletin was more doubtful in character; later, it was admitted that the French had been repulsed; and finally, late at night, all Paris knew that its troops had been beaten, driven back with immense losses by the German artillery. It was at this last fight that Regnault fell, possibly the last man killed by the Prussians. I can do no better than to quote from M. Cazalis the account of the search for Regnault by his friend Clairin: —

"About four, — night was falling, — the fight raged furiously in a wood near the park of Buzenval. In the tumult of the engagement the two friends, who had hitherto kept near to each other, were separated. The retreat was sounded, Clairin sought Regnault and could not find him; he ran to the front, called, rejoined his company, still could not find him, returned between the trees which the dying were supporting their backs against, went from one body to another, calling his friend's name all through the gloomy wood, and hearing no answering voice."

Mr. Hammerton continues the account: —

"Clairin sought anxiously the whole night through. At last he found a man who had seen Regnault, just when the retreat sounded, go near the wall behind which the Prussians were hiding themselves. Regnault had been called for at this moment, but he had answered, 'I shall fire my last shot, and come immediately.' The man believed that an instant after this he had seen Regnault fall.

"Clairin returned to Paris after a fruitless search, and at six all his worst apprehensions were fully confirmed. News was brought in by an ambulancier that Regnault had been found, and in evidence he brought a little chain with a silver tear. This tear had been given to him by his betrothed; and when she gave it she had said, 'Take it now that I am happy, but you must give it back to me the first time you make me weep.' And now the tear was brought back to her, and she wept."

On the next Sunday two hundred bodies were laid in the cemetery of Père-la-Chaise, among them that of Henri Regnault. Father Gratry, who was to have married them, wrote a noble letter to Regnault's betrothed.

"Lift up your soul!" he said; "this world is not a cruel game or a vain appearance. To die for a sacred cause cannot be nothingness and vanity. Such an act, such a gift of self, has a reality which subsists. No small thing is lost, still less anything great. Every martyr has his eternal life in full and substantial truth."

High words; but does not ordinary life furnish sufficient occasion for heroism? And what if the first cause, when carefully examined, were hardly worth dying for, — if all this devotion and self-sacrifice were poured forth in mistake? Then it was none the less sublime in the giver, while they who were responsible for all this wilful waste were all the more criminal.

Francisque Sarcey is right when, in relating these events, he is forced to cry out: "*Oh! l'abominable et stupide chose que la guerre!*"

CHAPTER XIII.

PEACE AND OTHER NEGOTIATIONS.

THE American Ambulance was rapidly filled after the day at Montretout. All connected with the hospital were overworked, and it was not until several days after the affair that Melicent's friend, the surgeon, said to her, "There is an acquaintance of yours in Tent K; perhaps you have not heard that he is wounded."

"Jules de Beaumont, then, has been shot," Melicent exclaimed; "will he recover?"

"He will recover; though he is not Jules de Beaumont, but our friend the newspaper correspondent."

"But James Osborne was a non-combatant; he was even under the protection of the Red Cross."

"It afforded him very poor protection, for a chance shot went directly through his arm badge. It was his own fault for venturing on the field too soon to collect the wounded."

Montretout had been a terrible day for James Osborne. He had watched the fight from a distance. The French massed steadily up into the redoubt of Montretout, until a torrent of German reserves in glittering helmets swept down upon them, driving them out of their position. To his surprise, the French returned to the charge

rushing furiously up the hill, clubbing their chassepots, fighting desperately hand to hand. It was like the charge of the Louisiana Tigers at Gettysburg. They fought with almost superhuman energy; the fortunes of the entire war hung on that particular charge, for from Montretout, Versailles could be shelled.

The Countess de Beaumont and Sallie watched the affair with spy-glasses from the roof of Villa Beaumont, Captain Müller at their side.

"If they could only have managed to make the sortie two hours earlier, before we became informed of their plans and were ready for them, they might have swept into Versailles and captured the Emperor himself. But our spies have done us good service, as usual."

Madame gave him a look of scorn, and even Sallie seemed haughtier after that speech.

The National Guard fell back at last, going down the hill in good order, — a hill strewn with wounded, — and then James Osborne hurried on to the almost smoking field to do his duty.

PRUSSIAN DRUMMER.

Edward King has given a description of a French battlefield (that of Champigny), so vivid and so truthful in the horror which presented itself to the faithful Red Cross man, that I can do no better than quote it here: —

"Great heaps of half-frozen dead, the bodies clinging to each other in the frosty atmosphere, — Saxon and Parisian, Prussian and Norman, Wurtemberger and Breton, — piled in indistinguishable masses together: such was the sight which met our eyes! A young Prussian caught in the deadly hail of a bursting shell at the very moment that he was drawing his sword to cheer on his men,

stood stark and dead, braced against a sapling, with his hand tightly clutching the iron cross which he wore at his breast."

It was on this hill, while attempting to collect the forms which seemed to beckon to him in their agony, that James Osborne was stricken down.

Melicent went to him as soon as possible. He was feverish, and suffering severely. His wound had been supposed to be slight, and he had insisted that others should have surgical attention before him; and it was possible that he had waited too long and might have to lose his arm. Melicent was surprised to see that he was very anxious on this point. It seemed hardly like James Osborne to be so careful for his personal appearance or comfort. Other patients were given to her care, and she could see him only occasionally; but Alice was with him several hours each day. When it was finally decided that the arm must be amputated, she saw a look of anguish come into his set face. "That ends the romance," he said bitterly.

Afterward, when delirious, she gained from his wanderings that there was some one whom he had loved, whom now he would never dare to approach. She talked over the matter with Melicent, and both agreed that it seemed very strange to think of James Osborne as a lover; he was such a quiet, grave, matter-of-fact fellow.

"He always seemed different from other men," said Melicent. "I always felt at ease in his presence, as though he were a brother; perhaps because I felt, without knowing why, that he could never be more."

After that, Melicent was very kind to the wounded man. Cruelly kind, it seemed to him, as he saw how much less reserved she was than formerly; and the words which Jean Ingelow puts into Merton's mouth were often in his mind: —

> "No, give me coldness, pride, or still disdain,
> Gentle withdrawal. Give me anything
> But this, — a fearless, sweet, confiding ease,
> Whereof I may expect, I may exact,

Considerate care, and have it — gentle speech,
And have it. Give me anything but this!
For they who give it, give it in the faith
That I will not misdeem them, and forget
My doom so far as to perceive thereby
Hope of a wife. They make this thought too plain;
They wound me, — oh, they cut me to the heart!"

The girls had been so busy at the hospital that they had hardly given any heed to outside events. Clemence told them that Jules had sent her word that he was still safe; but no one knew what would be the next event. The lower orders of the population became uneasy, and an attempt was made to establish the Commune. It was promptly quelled; but the authorities understood that they had a lion within their gates as well as wild beasts without, and that lion was hungry. The bombardment, which had ceased for a few days, had begun again, and provisions were nearly exhausted. On the 26th of January it was whispered that Jules Favre had gone to Versailles to treat with Bismarck for an armistice.

The next day Melicent read to James Osborne this proclamation from the *Journal officiel*: —

"In the present situation the Government is reduced to the necessity of negotiating. The negotiations are now taking place. The armistice has for its end the immediate reunion of a National Assembly. During the armistice the German army will occupy the forts; but we shall keep our National Guard intact, and none of our soldiers shall be transported from our territory."

"It is the beginning of the end," said James Osborne. "Every one knows that the negotiations referred to mean surrender, and it is a very bitter thing for the French. It will be hard for them to see the German tricolor at Valérien, but they have been fighting against an inexorable fate, and, humiliating though it may be, it means peace."

Later, a proclamation was displayed signed by all the members of the Government, containing among other items the following: —

CITIZENS, — The Convention which puts an end to the resistance of Paris is not yet signed, but it awaits only a few hours.

There remains with us exactly enough bread to await the reprovisioning of the city. We could not prolong the struggle without condemning to certain death two millions of men, women, and children.

The siege of Paris has lasted four months and twelve days; the bombardment an entire month. Mortality has more than tripled.

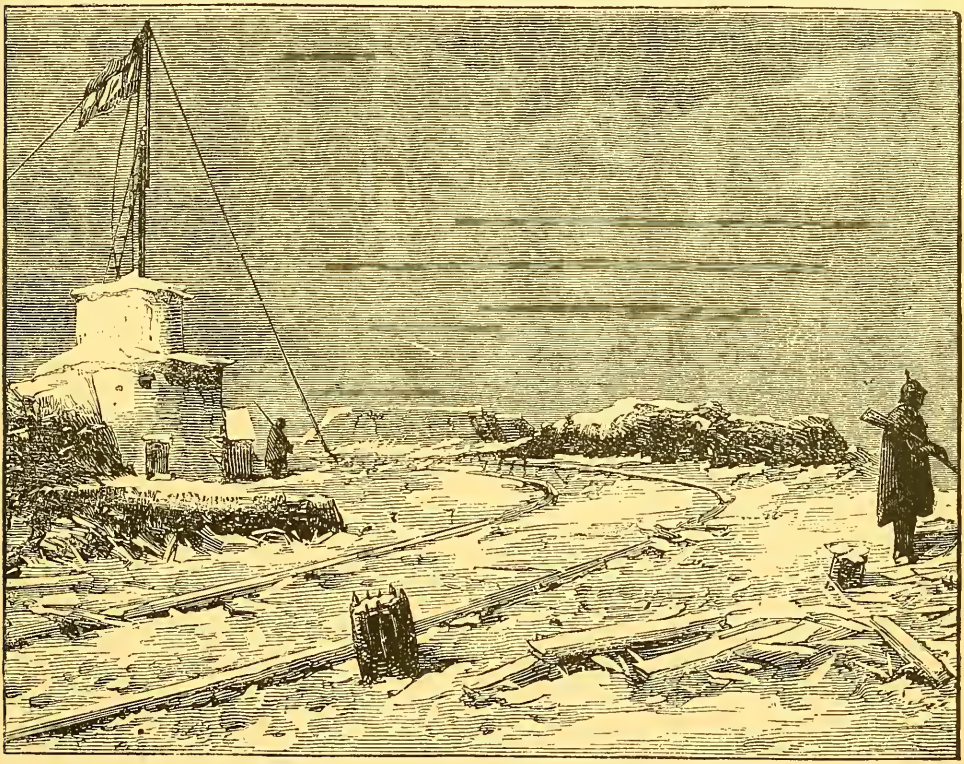
The enemy is the first to render homage to the energy and courage of the population of Paris. We leave the combat with honor, and, in spite of the grief of the present hour, with more faith than ever in the destiny of our country.

PARIS, Jan. 28, 1871.

James Osborne was right. In spite of wounded pride and much bitter disappointment, Paris was glad to welcome the approach of peace; and perhaps no one was so glad to hear the word as the homesick German soldiers, who had been kept so long against their will from friends and Fatherland. There had been but one gala day at Versailles that winter, — the 19th of January, when the Imperial Crown was bestowed upon King William. He was made emperor of the united German nations on the anniversary of the crowning of Frederick the Great. The ceremony took place in the great hall of the palace, the reception-room of Louis XIV., before all the highest officials of the army. After the Emperor had taken his vow, Bismarck read the proclamation to the German people. This must have been the crowning moment of the great statesman's life; for the unification of Germany was the one great task to which all his public labors had tended, with persistent, never-wearying aim, from the beginning of his career.

Peace, to the Prime Minister, was quite a secondary consideration. Captain Müller also viewed the peace preparations with little enthusiasm. He had fancied of late that Sallie seemed less cold and distant, and that if he could only have time he might advance to the footing of an intimate friend. But there was something in her clear eyes

which held him sternly in check; and February, the month of the armistice, was the shortest of the year. The utmost good-will existed now between many of the peasants and the German soldiers.



"THE GERMAN TRICOLOR AT VALÉRIEN."

Sallie saw a peasant girl carrying mushrooms home in a Prussian helmet. She wondered whether it was a souvenir from some skirmish-field, or if the owner of this novel market-basket were possibly waiting for his dinner in Fifine's cottage. She thought rather scornfully of the lightness of the French character in being able to meet on good terms men who had so recently been their mortal foes; and her disdain

came back with a rebound upon herself, for Captain Müller strolled down the garden walk, and she knew that her feeling for him was anything but hatred. She half excused herself because she was not French, and promised to avoid him more rigorously in future. If Captain Müller had but known that the secret of all Sallie's ill treatment lay in the fact that she really cared for him, it might have made him much more vainglorious than was for his good. Just now he was sufficiently presuming without that knowledge. He followed her with a desperate determination to have it out and over with. He overtook her looking with feigned interest at the shattered conservatory.

"I did not know," she remarked, "that we had been bombarded at the villa."

"It is the concussion of air from those heavy Krupp guns," the Captain replied. "You will soon be rid of them and of us. Colonel von Lindenthal tells me that the Emperor will review the troops on the 1st of March in the Bois de Boulogne, and after that we may be ordered home any moment."

"I congratulate you," Sallie said quietly.

"Are you, then, so very glad to see us go?"

Sallie shrugged her shoulders in a pretty way, which she had unconsciously learned from the French people. "It does not sound polite to say so," she replied, "but I am heartily glad that it is over at last; and I am sure that you are, too, Captain Müller."

"You know that I am not," he burst forth angrily; "or if you do not know it is time that you understood that, more than Fatherland, more than kindred, more than safety or health or life itself, I love you, *Herzchen*. This past month, in which I have suffered more bodily torture than in all my life put together, has been the happiest of my life. This hour of victory to our arms, which announces the close of a rigorous campaign and the return to home and comfort, is the greatest trial I have ever undergone, because it tears me from you, — because I love you, *mein Herzchen*."

He had spoken impetuously, rapidly; and Sallie had been so taken by surprise that she could not find the right word to stop him; but when he extended his arms she drew back.

"Tell me only that I may come again, and that you will be my wife,

'Wenn i' wiedrum komm'.'

I will go to America for you, if you wish."

"No, Captain Müller," Sallie replied at last, "it cannot be. I can never marry a soldier. War is a terrible, a wicked thing to me. It has become more and more so every day as I have become familiar with its scenes. It is not only extremely repugnant to me in all its aspects, but I believe it to be actually wrong."

"Is that a polite way of telling me that you do not love me?" the young man asked, deeply offended.

"I did not say so," Sallie replied, with an effort.

"Then I understand you merely wish to try your power over me to test my affection; but pray understand what it is that you ask. I have been brought up for the army, educated and fitted for no other profession, and I have a fine position, with an income which will put us above want all our days. I hear that I am to be medalled; that promotion is not impossible. You cannot wish me to relinquish all this for a mere whim, to make myself a pauper with no assured future to offer you. Why, I should so outrage my father's feelings that I believe he would disinherit me; and I fancy that all my family would imagine that there must be some dishonorable reason at the bottom. See, *Herzchen*, I am willing to do anything you ask; but you cannot ask this."

"No, Captain Müller," Sallie replied gently, "I have no right to ask it, and I do not. I see that it would be considered a disastrous mistake for a man in your position —"

"Can you not respect me?" he asked pleadingly. "Do you not see that I regret all this misery, that I only do what I under-

stand to be my duty? Am I such an assassin reeking with blood, after all?"

"Do not question me too closely," Sallie replied gravely. "Your part in the past war has not seemed to me worthy of a brave and honorable man; but I know that it was not your choice, and that you accepted it simply because it was assigned to you by your superiors. I blame you for nothing, Captain Müller. I ask you to make no change for my sake. I do thoroughly respect you; but all the same, while you are a soldier I cannot marry you."

MADAME SETS OUT FOR PARIS.

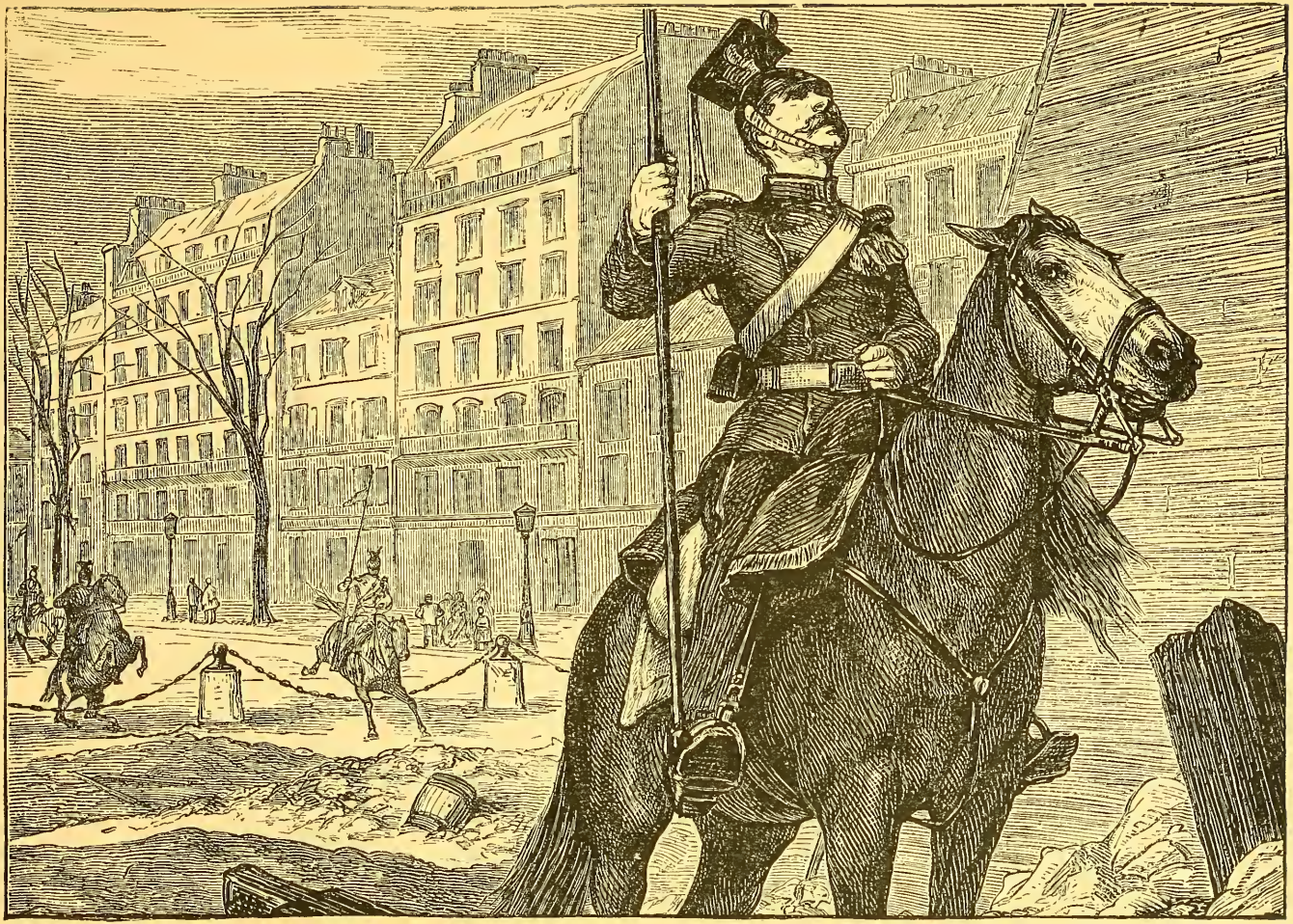
"I do not understand you," said the young man, a gloomy scowl settling on his frank face. "You are either more determined to have your own way than any woman I ever saw, or else you are a heartless coquette."

Sallie flushed crimson. "I am sorry you have such a poor opinion of me, Captain Müller. You see we are not at all fitted for each other, since we cannot carry on so brief a conversation as this without quarrelling." She turned from him to go into the house; but a sudden pity seized her, and she came back down the long walk and laid her hand kindly on his arm.

"Well?" he asked moodily.

"You will understand me better, sometime," she said. "Let us part as friends."

"Friends!" he replied, with a laugh. "No; either more or less as you will, but not friends."



THE UHLANS AT THE ARC DE TRIOMPHE.

Sallie turned away with a little sigh ; it was all very hard. She was glad that he had no conception of how hard it was for her, and yet she was more and more upheld by the conviction that she had done right. Much as she now realized that she loved Captain Müller, she could not become his wife and so give her life to sustaining and building up a career founded upon what she believed to be an iniquitous system. The future was dark before her, but she was certain that God would not forsake her, since she had not forsaken Him.

Madame was waiting for her in the salon. Colonel von Lindenthal had gained permission for her to enter Paris, and she had provided herself with a roll of *pain d'épice* for Jules, who since his boyhood had always been fond of this dainty. There was a passport for Sallie, too, and Lieutenant Schwarz was there with a carriage to conduct them to the city. Colonel von Lindenthal helped them in, and bade them a friendly farewell.

"Should you ever visit Berlin, Fräulein," he said hospitably, "my wife will be most happy to entertain you."

He touched his hat gallantly, the driver cracked his whip, and the carriage rolled down the Rue de Provence, past the Hôtel des Reservoirs, where the Crown Prince had his headquarters, on to Paris.

Sallie had taken her last look through the pretty iron *grille* of the Villa Beaumont; and that look had searched in vain for Captain Müller, who still stood behind the conservatory angrily grinding the gravel with his heel. Each thought that all was over between them, for neither at that time could foresee that in after years, in other lands and under happier circumstances, they would meet again.

Sallie had requested to be left at the Maison Duval. Madame sat at her little counter unchanged, and greeted her rapturously. But there was no one upstairs, she said; the ladies were all at the Ambulance Americaine. Thither Sallie took her way, discovering many

changes as she walked, and yet surprised at not finding more. The French, with their faculty for making the best of every situation, were already adapting themselves to the circumstances; and financiers were discussing how the two hundred million francs which Bismarck demanded as a war indemnity were to be raised. The faces in the restaurant were not the full, well-fed diners-out of former days; no *bon vivants* and *gourmets* discussing their *petits soupers* with merry jokes and stories. Men looked haggard and sober; and in the streets she saw many people who she felt sure were starving. But charity was at work; and the first train which entered Paris brought provisions which London had contributed to its relief.

At the American Hospital she was asked to wait but a few moments, before Alice joined her. The two girls flew into each other's arms, held each other at arm's-length, and gazed into each other's faces. It was almost more than they could do, not to indulge in joyful shrieks.

M. BONIVANT BEFORE THE SIEGE.

"I declare, you have been crying," Sallie whispered at last.

"Yes," Alice replied; "tears of joy over Melicent's happiness."

"What has happened to Melicent?"

"Oh! I forgot you have had no opportunity of knowing. She is engaged to James Osborne."

"That is good news, certainly. How did it come about?"

"I believe I had something to do with it," Alice replied modestly. "I saw that they misunderstood each other, and I determined that it was too blessed a thing not to happen, and some way, I scarcely know how, I gained his confidence, and one day he told me all about it; and while he was telling me,

Melicent came in unobserved and stood at the head of the bed. He had just said, 'So that is the whole story. I love her with all my heart, but maimed as I am I will never ask her to be my wife.' She came right forward with a great light shining in her eyes. 'Then I shall have to ask you, James,' she said; 'and now it is all right.' It is to be a long engagement; for Mr. Osborne is proud, and will not ask her to marry him until he can offer her a home."

"And how many newspaper letters will it take to build a home?" Sallie asked, with a smile.

"I have known homes to be raised on slighter foundations," Alice replied seriously. "James Osborne has done nothing as yet which has greatly distinguished him, but he has a sterling character. No woman need fear to trust her happiness to him; and some day, when those slow mills of the gods have ground up all the showy chaff of some other of our acquaintance, we shall be proud to have known him."

Shortly after this the National Assembly convened at Bordeaux, signed the Peace Preliminaries, and on March 6th the German army took its departure.

Mrs. Davenport and the Three Vassar Girls, finding themselves too much wearied to continue their labors during the summer, soon after crossed to the Isle of Wight, thus avoiding the terrible days of the Commune which soon followed. Before they left they had the pleasure of attending the marriage of Clemence with Jules de Beaumont. To every one's surprise the Countess seemed very desirous that it should take place; and there was no question of the young people's emigrating to America.

"They shall live at Villa Beaumont," said Madame; "for how is it possible that we should separate ourselves from them; and there is more than ever a future for Jules in France, since by this marriage he allies himself with the people. Who knows but we shall all see him some day a member of the Corps Législatif?"

To have heard Madame talk on the wedding day, one would have fancied that this marriage had been from the first the dearest object of her heart, and that the young people in no way owed their happiness to Three Vassar Girls in France.

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